

Frettenham Primary School
Hainford Primary School
Horsford Primary School
Old Catton Junior School
White Woman Lane School
St. Faiths' Primary School



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Ashley Best-White
Executive Headteacher

15 May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I wrote to you on Sunday evening following the Prime Minister's announcement regarding the planned re-opening of primary schools to specific year groups from the 1 June. Since then, I have been looking at the guidance as it is published daily by the government to begin preparing for this.

After 21 years of headship (yes, I am that old!) I have been in the privileged position to look after other people's children, lead groups of dedicated staff and be involved in communities. This has taught me to be honest and to ensure I communicate both the positives of what we achieve but also the issues we face. Therefore, I would like to take the opportunity, at this point, as I am still wading through the government documents, the teaching union's advice and the risk assessments to be undertaken, to share the following initial planning with you.

If there is to be an increase in the number of pupils attending school, we need a careful, measured and methodical plan that is built around the highest safety standards so that schools can do everything in their power to reduce the risks posed to all members of their community. At the time of writing, we are still awaiting an explanation of the scientific and medical advice the government is relying on to make these decisions. The information from the government, as currently set out, does not provide us with that plan.

The guidance we have received at the time of writing is notably silent on what the science says when it comes to the safety of adults in schools. Of course, we absolutely need to know about the impact and risk to children, but we also need to know about the risk to staff, parents and the wider community too.

The plans we have received so far suggest that appropriate social distancing in schools will be achieved with less children in school, with up to 15 pupils allowed in a group. Our schools and classrooms will not allow for any meaningful social distancing if we have such large groups in them. Our groups will need to be far smaller than 15, current planning suggests groups of 8. Children will be sorted into what the government is calling 'bubbles' – meaning they will be in a group of children and an adult. The adult can only be in one 'bubble' and the 'bubbles' cannot mix at all. This is necessary so that any outbreak of the virus can be tracked and traced and those people who have been in the affected 'bubble' can isolate and be tested.

So children will need to be in small groups, and we would decide on the 'bubbles', they may be split from their friends, and are likely to be taught by someone other than their own class teacher, in rooms that were not their original classrooms. Our youngest children in our primary schools will not have access to all the practical resources they would normally have because they all have to be kept clean to avoid infection.

There will need to be staggered break and lunchtimes when children will only be allowed to play with children in their own 'bubble'. Children will have to stay in these 'bubbles' for the entire day. Children are likely to be at their designated desks for the vast majority of the day, eating lunch at their desks and having to socially distance during planned breaks, including toilet breaks and hand washing breaks as set out in the guidance. There will be staggered starts to the day and staggered finish times to avoid congestion at the school gates and one adult only dropping off and collecting. Due to the staggered starts and end times, the

school day is likely to be a little shorter than you are used to. No parents will be allowed on the school site and will be required to remain socially distanced from each other too.

Staff will also need to remain with their small group 'bubble' and be socially distanced from each other on the school site.

The Government guidance on 11th May acknowledges 'one of the key issues for schools will be class sizes, staff availability and the ability to remain two metres apart from each other and staff.' In order to accommodate the year groups we have to prioritise, as well as the vulnerable children and those of key workers, it is unlikely that we will be able to offer full time provision. Therefore it may be necessary for classes to return to school on a rota basis for example, or for just one or two days a week, or for part days (morning or afternoon sessions). Teachers also have to plan for these groups and we will need to continue providing work for the rest of the school.

Over the next few days, we will continue to engage with the government, the teaching unions and with you, our parents. Early next week there will be a survey for you to complete to assist us with our planning. I do hope you will help us by completing it by Wednesday 20 May. The first question of the survey will be have you read this letter first.

Our plan at the moment is to continue to provide activities for learning at home, keep contact with our families and to continue to support each other in this uncertain and difficult time. We will only expand our provision when we are confident we can do so and will keep you informed. Given the level of planning and changes to the school environment that need to be put in place in order to reduce the risk of infection to staff, children and you at home, we are not able to confirm the start date for your child to return to school should this be the decision of the government, and then subsequently the decision you take. We will communicate the start date to you as soon as we can but we hope it may be in the week commencing 1 June, or early the following week.

I apologise for writing to you at such length but I wanted you to have as much information as possible before sending you the survey. What I do ask please, is that you decide one way or the other whether to send your child back to school or not for the rest of the summer term, as this will take a lot of organising. It remains your choice and there will be no penalties for non - attendance.

Thank you for the time you have given to reading this. I appreciate that it is a difficult decision.

Keep safe,



Ashley Best-White
Executive Headteacher
The Nebula Federation