

To the parents of pupils in Year 6

16<sup>th</sup> May 2020



Dear Parents,

Following the Prime Minister's address to the nation last Sunday (10<sup>th</sup> May), in which he talked about the possible re-opening of schools, the Department for Education has issued guidance which states.....

*As a result of the huge efforts everyone has made to adhere to strict social distancing measures, the transmission rate of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased. We therefore anticipate, with further progress, that we may be able, from the week commencing 1 June, to welcome back more children to early years, school and further education settings. We will only do this provided that the 5 key tests set by government justify the changes at the time, including that the rate of infection is decreasing and the enabling programmes set out in the roadmap are operating effectively. As a result we are asking schools, colleges and childcare providers to plan on this basis, ahead of confirmation that these tests are met.*

The full guidance can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

The government's request that we start planning for the possible return of Year 6 pupils has thrust us all into a fresh situation to manage, and it is going to be essential that we work together as one community to find the correct way forward. We all know that a successful return to school for our classes, whenever the start date, will depend upon high levels of teamwork, co-operation and trust between pupils, staff and parents.

The safety of pupils, staff and their families will of course remain the priority and a detailed risk assessment is being prepared by the school for the possible return of classes. The government has stated that 'shielding children' should not attend school, and that, if a child lives with someone who is 'shielding', they should not be in school. There may also be parents of children who do not fall into these definitions but who would not want their child to come into school after half term, and these wishes would of course be fully respected by the school. With regard to boarders, I know that Mrs Wells, our Head of Boarding, has been discussing the situation with parents on an individual basis and I am in close contact with Mrs Wells.

Feedback from pupils, parents and staff, tells us that the current provision of remote learning is working very well for the vast majority of families and none of us want a situation where a return to school results in a reduction in the quality of education and personal development for any of our children.

The staff and I have spent time this week looking at how a return to school could work, and it is exciting of course to think of more pupils and staff back in school. However, there is no getting away from the fact that the government guidance and the measures adopted by our risk assessment mean that the children's experience in school would not be the same as it was pre-virus.



HEADMASTER: Andrew Edwards BA Hons

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From a curriculum point of view, it is probable that, to start with, pupils in school would follow essentially the same timetable as they are following at the moment. It is likely that most of the teachers of Year 6 would continue to teach the pupils remotely from home. Pupils who are not in school would therefore continue to be taught and supported to the same high level as is happening now. On the other hand, there are certain activities which we would be able to do with our pupils because they are on site, and we would do what we could to give them a positive and enjoyable time in school (examples of this may include sport, performing arts etc). The activities which we would be able to do in school would change over time according to changing official guidance. In brief, we would aim to 'start small' and build the experience over time as the situation allows.

We are unlikely to be able to run our minibuses, and we are currently not able to plan for the use of the swimming pools or indoor sports facilities. Regarding cricket, there has been nothing so far from the government or the English Cricket Board to say that we are able to start playing cricket again. On the other hand, it may be possible that the pupils could play tennis safely.

It is our intention to build a Question and Answer document and share this with you if and when the government confirms its request that schools re-open for their Year 6 pupils. Please do provide us with any thoughts or questions which you have by clicking on this link in this email.

We will not be able to respond individually to each parent, but please rest assured that we will give all contributions very careful consideration as we continue to work on our risk assessment and build our Question and Answer document.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to reiterate how appreciative and thankful I am for the tremendous support which you continue to give to your children's education and to the school. If the government does go ahead with its plan for Year 6, it will be a new chapter for us all and a fresh opportunity to continue the wonderful teamwork which has resulted in such a high quality of education and personal development for our children during this term.

With best wishes,  
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Edwards', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andrew Edwards