

To the parents of pupils in Year 6

29th May 2020

Dear Parents,

I hope that you and your families have been able to have a very enjoyable and restful half term, blessed as it has been by fantastic weather.

Thank you very much for all of your responses to my letter of Saturday 23rd May, which have been extremely helpful for our planning.

You will, I am sure, be aware that the Government has confirmed its request for schools to welcome Year 6 pupils back on site. Please assume therefore that we will be open to your children from Wednesday 3rd June unless you hear otherwise from me.

As expected, the responses from the whole of the year group varied greatly. There is an article today on the BBC website entitled 'The coronavirus 'class divide': Parents judged for school return choices', which I found both sad and optimistic (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/stories-52835571>). It reports that some parents are very sadly choosing to be openly judgemental of decisions made by other parents, and I sincerely hope that we can avoid this at Taunton Prep School. I hope that you are all absolutely confident that you have the school's full support for your decision, whether you are intending to send your child(ren) into school or not. The optimism in the article stems from Harriet Shearsmith, founder of parenting website 'Toby and Roo', who has publicly stated that she won't be sending in her children but has also been careful to add the caveat that she is not criticising other parents:-

"If you fall into the group of people who are choosing differently to me or you simply don't have a choice, this isn't a judgement of you or a dismissal of your situation" (Harriet Shearsmith)

As I said in my letter last Saturday, you and your families are all in your own unique personal situation and it is vital that we continue to stick together as a community, showing each other empathy and understanding during these very unusual times. I agree with Harriet entirely that parents are the best judge of what is right for their child and for their family in this situation.

Based on the intentions expressed at this stage, we are expecting just under half of the year group in school. Having read all of the comments made by you during this past week, please note the following:

- We fully understand that parents will want to keep their decision under review and it will be perfectly acceptable to change plans. If you have indicated that you will be sending your child(ren) into school, we will expect them in school unless you inform us otherwise. If your plans change, then please send an email to the School Office at tpsenquiries@tauntonschool.co.uk. The more notice you can give us, the easier it is for us.
- It will be perfectly acceptable for your children to be in school for some of the days of the week and not others, and we fully understand parents choosing a 'phased' return for their child. Again, it would be most helpful if you could give the School Office as much notice as you can about your plans, so that we know when to expect your child in school.
- One or two parents have asked if their child could do half days instead of full days. We have considered this carefully and we do fully understand why parents and pupils would wish for this. However, we feel that, on

balance, the most positive way forward for the whole year group is to start off by saying that pupils must do a full day (8.20am until 3.30pm). We will, however, keep this under review.

- As indicated in our Qs and As of 23rd May, pick-up will be between 3.30pm and 4.00pm but we will be able to supervise children until 5.00pm if this suits families better.

I would like to repeat again that it would be lovely if the provision offered by the school could satisfy the different wishes of all of our parents and pupils, and comply with government guidance. Alas, this is impossible, but we are doing the very best that we can.

A lot of information has been provided in the Qs and As (sent to parents on 23rd May), which all remain applicable for pupils coming back onsite next Wednesday. Attached to this letter is a document with extra details which are useful for parents and pupils to know before the weekend. We will be training staff on Monday and Tuesday, as well as providing you and your children with further information, including timetables for the afternoon, drop-off and pick-up arrangements, and protocols around behaviour, hygiene and social distancing.

We are very much looking forward to seeing in person those pupils who will be in school next week. At the same time, please rest assured that, for those pupils who will be staying at home, we will continue to provide the same high quality of education and care which they have been enjoying since the start of this term.

I hope that you all have an enjoyable and restful weekend. Please do contact us if you have further queries.

With best wishes,
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AED', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Edwards