



Ancaster  
Church of England Primary School  
Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **A detailed response on proposals to partially re-open the school**

Our communication with you recently has centred around the Government's ambition to open schools to wider groups of pupils from 1st June, as long as it is safe to do so. The Prime Minister signalled that the children of Key Workers as well as other key groups (children with a social worker/children with an EHCP) would be able to continue accessing priority places and we would also be welcoming back children from Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

We immediately began planning for how this might work, keeping the safety of children and staff at the centre of our decisions and assessing any potential risks in line with guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). It very quickly became clear that the guidance we had been working to from the DfE was unachievable and would have meant pupil and staff safety would be compromised. Official guidance has changed several times since the Prime Minister's original announcement was made and updated directives from the DfE are now different to those we received initially. This has meant our planning and decision-making process has taken longer than we anticipated.

The Government have made it clear that:

- School leaders and governors know the unique circumstances of their schools best e.g. school layout, staffing availability, class sizes, number of key workers in the community etc.
- This means that they are best placed to make the detailed decisions required when it comes to the safety of their schools.

The latest guidance from the DfE asks schools to assess the number of places they can offer once the children of Key Workers (and other groups outlined above) have been allocated into small groups and appropriate teaching spaces. We are also being instructed to ask children to come back to school on a full-time basis rather than part time or on any kind of rota in the first instance. Instead, if we are unable to offer places to all children in all of the 3 year groups (Reception, Year 1 and Year 6), having assessed the level of occupancy left in the building, the youngest children in our setting should be prioritised first. For our school, that is Reception.

The government will not be making their announcement on whether it is safe to re-open schools from 1st June until 28th May. If they decide that it IS safe to re-open, we feel it is only fair to inform you now that we have taken the following decision:

- **In the week commencing 1st June, school will only be opening to the Key Worker children who have been accessing our provision throughout the lockdown.**

Our reason for taking this decision is because we do not believe that there is sufficient time from the point of that announcement to re-open safely in any other capacity than to the children we have been open to up until this point. Having allocated our Key Worker children, we know they will be occupying 4 of our teaching spaces leaving only 3 more spaces available for other groups of children. Applying the government guidance means that in the very first instance of welcoming any wider groups of children back, we will prioritise Reception children. Regrettably at this time we are unable to offer children from either Year 1 or 6 the opportunity to come back to school. Children who remain at home should continue to access remote learning which will continue throughout for children in all year groups.

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We will use the week from 1st-5th June to ensure our plans are implemented appropriately, all staff training has taken place, the rooms have been suitably prepared and our risk assessments have been tested to ensure that every risk has been fully identified and mitigated where possible. We will be contacting the parents of Reception children after half term who have indicated that they either will, or possibly will, send their child back to school to discuss this further and ascertain final numbers for Reception for **w/c 8th June**. All of this is dependent on the announcement by the government that it is safe for schools to re-open. If schools are told that they are unable to re-open as part of any easing of the lockdown, then the plans outlined in this letter will remain as plans until we are given new guidance and dates.

Children in Reception who want to come back to school and where parents are happy for them to do so will be split across 3 classrooms in small groups, where the rooms will have been modified to prioritise the health and safety of the pupils and staff. We are unable to guarantee that they will be with their usual teaching staff or that they will be in their usual teaching spaces. All soft furnishings from the classrooms will be removed, the children will be asked to adhere to strict social distancing guidelines, their tables will be distanced and they will not come into contact with any other group or staff member throughout the day. Break times will be staggered with designated areas of the outside space outlined for the children to use but away from any other group) with the same again at lunchtimes and the parents will only have the option to order the cold, packed lunch option from Good Lookin' Cookin' (ordering is available now) with no hot meal options available at all during this time. Children will eat their lunch in their classroom. The rooms will be deep cleaned every day by our cleaning team and again throughout the day whilst the children are outside and any resources that the children use to aid their learning will be thoroughly cleaned after they have been used. We will not be able to send reading books home or allow any items from home to be brought into school and children will have staggered drop off and pick up times and points which we will communicate nearer the time. There are many other factors that we also will need to communicate with returning pupils but this will be in separate communication to the parents who tell us their child is returning. All of these measures outlined will also be in place for the Key Worker children - meals for Key Worker children will also need to be ordered directly from Good Lookin' Cookin' ahead of the new term.

We truly understand that this must be very frustrating for children and parents of Year 1 and Year 6 who had been working to a potential return to school on 1<sup>st</sup> June and we apologise that we are unable to accept everyone back into school. We want nothing more than our school to be back to normal and see our bright, lively and engaging classrooms full of all our children's laughter, learning and fun but it is extremely important that we approach any wider re-opening with extreme caution to reduce risks to children and staff. We wholeheartedly agree as school leaders and governors that every tentative step we take to achieve this 'new normal' must be undertaken slowly and in line with every element of guidance that has been published. We will continue to keep you all updated every step of the way and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Yours sincerely,

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Chair of Governors

Mr Sam Eden  
Headteacher

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