

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parent

I am sure many of you watched the announcements made by the Prime Minister last night. I wanted to write to reassure you that as a Federation we are fully aware of the most recent update and have already starting working on how as schools we will implement the expectations set out.

We all want to get more children back into school as soon as it is safe to do so. We are dedicated to the care and education of children and none of us wish to see classrooms empty for a day longer than they need to be. Our first priority is and always will be the safety of children, families and our staff team. We also want ensure parents have the confidence to send their children to school.

There are questions that still needing answers and greater clarification and guidance needed: both for parents and staff. I will continue to keep everyone updated over the coming days and weeks but felt it was important to write following the announcement to reassure parents we have begun to plan for the scenario outlined last night.

**Did schools know already what was going to be announced?**

No. Schools receive information at the same time as the public.

**Are schools open?**

No. Schools are still closed to the vast majority of children.

**Has there been any change to who can attend school?**

No. School is open to children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home and for those children who have an EHCP or where the family has a social worker.

**What are the Government's plans for allowing more children to return to school?**

Schools may reopen on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June. The phased reopening would be for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

For our schools that would equate to 14 children at Follifoot and 54 children at Spofforth. We assume in addition to Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home and for those children who have an EHCP or where the family has a social worker will also be in school. When combining all children identified this would equate to approximately 25-30 children at Follifoot and 80 children at Spofforth.

**When will schools and parents definitely know if reception, Year 1 and Year 6 are returning on 1<sup>st</sup> June?**

No guidance as yet given from Government.

**Will children from the identified year groups be expected to come to school each day?**

No guidance as yet given from Government.

**What scientific evidence can schools share with parents to show it is safe for schools to open to the identified year groups?**

No guidance as yet given from Government.

**Will children be placed in smaller class sizes to ensure social distancing?**

No guidance as yet given from Government. Space in our small schools is at a premium. Schools would utilise all available space possible to support social distancing while also ensuring spaces are suitable and familiar for the children.

**Will I have to send my child to school if they are in one of these year groups? What would happen if I don't feel it is safe to send them?**

No guidance given from Government. We will do everything possible to reassure families it is safe for children to come to school.

**How can schools support children in school and those being educated at home?**

No guidance as yet given from Government. Based on early calculations each school would have approximately 60-70% of children (including all vulnerable children) in school each day. To safely manage this it is likely the majority if not all staff will be required in school each of their working days. Schools will also need to cover for staff for whom it is not safe to return.

In this scenario both schools would need to revisit the current methods of supporting learning at home as it would not be sustainable to maintain these alongside working in school also. It is highly unlikely that current arrangements will be sustainable alongside in school commitments. Please be reassured we will continue to support children who are at home but will have to revisit the ways in which we do to ensure it is sustainable.

**Will other year groups be in school before Summer?**

No guidance given from Government.

**What about social distancing for pupils and staff?**

Considering that social distancing within education and childcare settings with very young children is very difficult - if not impossible to maintain - this is going to be a significant challenge. We are looking at the guidance for employers and the specific guidance for schools and will plan for how best we can implement guidance. We will share our plans with parents.

**What about risks to staff and children?**

There was no clarity regarding how a return to school will impact on such risks to staff or children, especially for those with family members in vulnerable categories. We would expect that further guidance will give consideration to the role of PPE and testing.

**What about returning to work, can I send my child to school now?**

The Prime Minister stressed that anyone who can't work from home, should be actively encouraged to go to work.

However, there has been no change in who can attend school, nor any information regarding whether other family members can provide child care e.g. Grandparents. There has been no update from the Department for Education.

**In summary**

- Schools are still closed.
- There has been no change in who can attend school.
- Schools may reopen to more children on the 1<sup>st</sup> June. The phased reopening would be for reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils.
- There has been no further guidance on social distancing in a Primary Schools.
- The assumption is children of key workers and those identified, as vulnerable (having an EHCP or social worker) will continue to access school alongside the identified year groups after the 1<sup>st</sup> June.
- There is no guidance regarding siblings of children in these year groups.
- There is no guidance on PPE for children or staff in school.
- If using the current in school provision please continue to keep us informed of the days on which you need to access this provision by emailing either [admin@follifoot.n-yorks.sch.uk](mailto:admin@follifoot.n-yorks.sch.uk) or [admin@spofforth.n-yorks.sch.uk](mailto:admin@spofforth.n-yorks.sch.uk)

Thank you to all parents for your support, to all children for your resilience and to all staff for your continued commitment to our schools. Very best wishes.

Yours sincerely

*P.Griffiths*

Mr Paul Griffiths – Headteacher