



17<sup>th</sup> June 2020

## WIDER OPENING OF SCHOOL FROM 22<sup>nd</sup> JUNE 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am pleased to be able to tell you that schools have now been told by the Director of Population Health in Tameside that she is happy to recommend that we can now proceed to the wider opening of school to the priority year groups from 22<sup>nd</sup> June. This is great news and we are once again preparing to welcome the children back from this date.

For those parents sending children back in these year groups, the phased return we planned from 8<sup>th</sup> June will still stand, albeit two weeks later. This means that only key worker children will attend on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June, followed by Reception on Tuesday, Year 1 Wednesday, and Nursery on Thursday. Year 6 will return on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June.

As you know from my last letter, I was awaiting guidance from the Government regarding the return of any other children now that a full reopening to all pupils will no longer happen until the Autumn term. The guidance has been issued and has left the decision to schools in both ensuring the school has sufficient capacity to bring any children back and which year group we would prioritise next.

For this reason, after careful consideration, I need to tell you that I have made the decision that the next year group to be a priority for return to Dowson will be Year 5. This year group have to face their final year of primary school next year: a year in which they have 9 months until they are expected to take their SATs assessments, which measure how well they have learned the full Primary National Curriculum. In these 9 months, they will need to cover both the missed parts of this curriculum from Year 5 and complete the full Year 6 curriculum. Please don't misunderstand my intentions when I talk about SATS – this isn't about the numbers of children that can pass a test. My endeavours are to ensure the mastering of the curriculum they measure in order that our pupils make the best possible start to the next stage of their education at High School. I know with this in mind, you will appreciate why I think it is most fair that they come back to get a head start on this difficult task.

I know this will be disappointing to lots of you with children in other year groups and I will continue to look at ways that we might possibly manage even a small amount of face-to-face time for these children in a safe manner before the end of the term. I will continue to keep you informed over the coming weeks.

In order that I can consider the school's capacity for a Year 5 return, I will be sending a survey out today to gauge the numbers of pupils whose parents would like to take up this offer. At this stage, it is not a definite offer but allows me to consider how feasible this will be with the staff and space I have available to me to still operate within the guidance.

In addition to considering the potential numbers from Year 5, to ensure this capacity is sustainable, I will also need, in line with government guidance, to cap the numbers of returning children in the priority year groups from Friday





# DOWSON PRIMARY ACADEMY

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26<sup>th</sup> June. This means that if your child is in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, they will not be guaranteed a place after this date if you have not already taken this up by this point.

I know that you will understand the need for me to put these measures in place in order to plan for the maximum number of children returning safely who wish to do so.

We will continue to offer places for the children of key workers and those who are considered vulnerable. This will be a full time offer from 22<sup>nd</sup> June also.

Please refer to the group information sheets sent via Class Dojo for the staggered start and finish times and group leaders etc. for your children. Year 6, your information sheets will follow next week, as will Year 5 if this phase proves to be viable. The information on how to prepare your children to return to school can be used – again – and I will upload the stories promised that you didn't get to see last time over the next couple of days. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask via all the usual channels. We are here to help, however we can.

I can't wait to see you all very soon and give you all a Dowson hug!

Warmest regards

Mrs Kathryn Thornburn  
Principal.