



11th June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Another letter attempting to keep you as informed as possible with the ever changing pace and direction of wider school openings. As you know, the Director of Population Health for Tameside strongly advised the first phase of wider opening to children in Nursery, Reception, Years 1 and 6 should not go ahead in light of the regional R rate, reported as 1.01. Tameside Local Authority made the decision to halt proceedings of phase one in its schools and the Enquire Learning Trust made the same decision for its schools in the area in light of this. The new date for this phase to begin is 22nd June, but of course, we do not know what the circumstances around the R rate and further regional and local data will be at that point. I am really hoping that we can go ahead with this – we were really looking forward to welcoming those invited back into school with a great big 'Dowson hug'! Keep everything crossed!

You may also be aware that yesterday, the government announced that phase 2 of wider opening to more pupils, in which their ambition was to bring all children back to school for the last month of term, will now not go ahead. Instead, schools can choose to take more pupils back if it has the capacity to do so safely and within the constraints of the guidance – which is supposed to be coming to schools soon.

Of course, this leaves many of you wondering if your children will get a chance to come back into school at all before September and me wondering if we will be able to do so within the guidelines we are given. I would love nothing more than to get as many children back to school as possible before we finish for the summer break. It would help children to re-establish relationships and learning behaviours for school as well as catching up and securing some of the vital parts of the curriculum that will help children to make the most successful start to their new year groups when they do return in September. It would also mean they would be afforded some transition activities and support that would help them to have closure on one year before starting the next, thus easing their anxieties that will come from such unknown on top of the 6 months they will eventually have had away from school and education in its fullest sense. Of course, whatever happens and whether children are in school or not for the rest of summer term, we will endeavour to ensure all of these things can happen in some way, either remotely, or in September.

However, as frustrating as it is, until the government issue further guidance on which year groups this might be for, how this might look and the measures that will need to be in place, I cannot guarantee that we will have any kind of phase 2. I recognise that this will be incredibly disappointing to many of you who, after 12 weeks of home schooling, are, understandably, losing momentum and enthusiasm – and I know many children want to be back too. For that, I am sorry and can only promise we will continue to do what we can to support you through the next stages as they occur. You've done a wonderful job so far – keep going!

As always, as we have further updates from the government and I work with the Enquire Learning Trust to implement them, I will keep you updated.





Finally, we continue to be open for the children of key workers and those who are considered vulnerable throughout the term. Many of you are asking whether this will be the case of the summer holidays as it was at Easter and Whit. Please see a statement from the Enquire Learning Trust regarding this provision here:

The Rt. Hon. Gavin Williamson MP (Secretary of State for Education), recently told parliament that, "There are currently no plans to make up class time lost during the lockdown by requiring pupils to return early from their holidays in August."

*All the Enquire Learning Trust schools will close as usual for the summer holidays. This includes our child care provision for vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers. This school will close on **Thursday 23rd July**. This will allow essential works to take place in school and key preparations to be made to ensure a successful start to the new school year for all children.*

*The new school year will begin for children on **Wednesday 2nd September**.*

We will keep this under review should we receive further instructions from the Department of Education.

We have also had enquiries about the usual holiday club provision through our paid childcare provision of Dowson's Den. Again, I cannot confirm that this will be a possibility until I have guidance on the way this would need to run. I am currently exploring the possibility that we could open the Den over summer and will communicate the decision and details, should this be the case, as soon as possible.

Thank you, as always for your patience and understanding – you have truly been wonderful in your support of school. I am incredibly grateful for all of your lovely messages of thanks and support – they keep us going. Thank you!

I will be in touch soon.

Stay Safe!

Warm regards,

Mrs Kathryn Thornburn
Principal