



FAIRFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parent/Carer,

We are continuing to plan our offer of a **phased** reopening of the school **from June 1st**, working carefully within the Government's guidelines. The date on which the first group will be invited to return is yet to be confirmed as we will be ensuring that we are acting in the safest possible way with the information we have available to us.

The dates, and the way in which pupils return, will vary from school to school due to many factors including the layout of their buildings and the staffing they have available.

It is important to state from the outset that **the national plan to reopen schools is conditional and depends upon whether the five key tests set by government justify the changes at the time**. However, schools are being asked to plan for opening, ahead of confirmation that these tests are met. The final decision whether or not to open a school and how it opens, lies with the school leaders.

I would like to emphasise again that the safety of children, families, staff and wider community will always be our highest priority. We are currently in the risk assessment phase of our planning and I would like to stress that our ability to phase return will be based upon detailed investigations to determine our capacity to implement the protective measures outlined by the Government for schools. A key part of this is understanding how many children and staff we can have in the building whilst maintaining the measures. As part of this process, it is essential that we ascertain the level of demand for places and consult on the approach and measures being taken.

Key Worker & Vulnerable Children

The Cockermouth COVID-19 Childcare Hub has been operating from Fairfield Primary since schools closed on March 20th. From June 1st 2020, the hub will cease to operate and all children will go back to their 'home' schools.

We will be operating a Fairfield key worker and vulnerable child provision from June 1st. Details of how this will operate will be released soon. ALL KEY WORKERS SHOULD COMPLETE THE SURVEY.

Returning Groups

The Government has asked that we concentrate on returning the groups named below but they have an ambition of further groups returning later in the academic year. The groups will be invited to return in a



way that allows us to safely implement the guidance and it might result in some groups not being phased in through the first intake. This will be confirmed following our risk assessment.

Returning groups:

- Children of Key Workers essential to the Government's COVID-19 Response & children with an EHCP or allocated social worker
- Nursery
- Reception
- Year One
- Year Six

It is absolutely vital that children with conditions which render them clinically extremely vulnerable should not attend school. Children who live with someone with conditions which render them clinically extremely vulnerable should not attend school. Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) should follow medical advice with regards to their actions.

For more information about these groups, please follow this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19#who-is-clinically-extremely-vulnerable>

Why Primary schools? Do I have to send my child in?

Here at Fairfield, we would love to see all of the children back as soon as it is safe. It is the best place for them to learn and it is good for their mental wellbeing to have social interactions with pupils and teachers. The Government has acknowledged that it is important to get them back as soon as it is possible to grow and benefit in school. The Government's decision to begin with these groups of children is based on their understanding that it is important for children to return to their education as well as their scientific research which states, *"There is a high degree of confidence that the **severity of disease** in children is lower than in adults. There is a moderate to high degree of confidence that the **susceptibility to clinical disease** of younger children (up to age 11 to 13) is lower than for adults."*

The full detail of their findings can be found in the link at the end of this letter.

It is important to stress that we recognise that the decision of whether or not you send your child back to school (as part of the phased return) may be a difficult one. There is **no expectation** that parents should choose to send their children to school as part of this phased return should they not wish to. During this period, **attendance at school** will not be monitored in the usual way. Parents **will not** face consequences for non-attendance and schools **will not be held to account** for attendance levels.

You will appreciate that our offer will be determined once the **risk assessment period** is satisfactorily completed by school leaders and governors and this is currently subject to change as further guidance is provided by the DFE, Local Authority and Trade Unions.



Preparations to implement protective measures outlined by the Government.

The Government recognises that, “Unlike older children and adults, **early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2m apart from each other and staff**”. Therefore, protective measures recommended by the Government will **not** include social distancing as we have come to understand it outside the school environment. Instead schools should take into account the following hierarchy of measures:

- Avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- Frequent hand cleaning and good food hygiene practices
- Regular cleaning of settings
- Minimising contact and mixing

We will always strive to reduce risk by adhering to the latest guidance and stringent safety practices. However, we are unable to guarantee the complete removal of risk.

An outline of the key measures designed as part of a phased return:

- Pupils will work in groups of no more than 15 as recommended. Group sizes will be determined by taking into account the age/needs of the children and the size of the room in which they will work. Wherever possible, children will consistently be taught by the same staff member in order to reduce ‘contact points’. This may mean that your child will not be placed with their current teacher or based in their current classroom.
- Groups of children (and adults) will be kept separate from each other at all times including in lessons, breaks and mealtimes wherever possible. This requires a lot of careful timetabling!
- In order to reduce ‘contact points’, the school timetable will be staggered including at the beginning and end of the school day, break times and meal times.
- Classrooms will be redesigned in order to promote safe practice. With older children this will mean an allocated table, spaced away from others, and the removal of additional furniture from classrooms.
- We recognise that younger children cannot be expected to remain at a desk for lengthy periods of time and so this may be managed by reducing group sizes further.
- A reduction in the number and nature of resources used – particularly play-based resources for younger children to enable regular cleaning; and the removal of other furniture and resources from classrooms.
- Initially, most lessons will follow exactly the same format as our daily home learning lessons as these will still be provided for those at home, although we will place an emphasis on well-being and mental health.
- Staff ratios in the Early Years will remain in place.
- We will ensure that rooms are well ventilated throughout the day and that there is lots of opportunity for outdoor learning when the weather permits.
- Stringent additional handwashing and cleaning will take place throughout the day to help manage the risk of infection.
- Nursery children may be allocated sessions but **will not be permitted** to attend an additional setting during this period.
- Children and staff, who present with COVID-19 symptoms, will be isolated prior to being sent home. All children and staff will be eligible for a test for COVID-19 if displaying symptoms.



- Adults (other than staff) will not be permitted to enter the building unless in an emergency.
- Pupils will be allocated drop off and pick up points; will only be accompanied by one adult, who will need to adhere to social distancing.

What you should do now.

Through this letter I have aimed to provide you with enough information as possible about the phased return. It provides some additional information on how we are aiming to implement protective measures in order to keep children, families and staff as safe as we are able and how these will impact on the day to day running of the school. **It should be remembered that risk cannot be entirely removed and so it is for parents/guardians to come to their own decision based upon the information that we have provided.**

In order to support us to complete our risk assessment and inform plans, we need your help. We would like **ALL** parents of children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 and those who are key workers essential to the Government's COVID-19 response (who cannot make alternative childcare arrangements) to complete the survey at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RCD29MS>

If you do not complete the survey, then we might not be able to allocate a place for your child in the first phase.

Please complete this no later than **WEDNESDAY 20th May at 17:00**. We regret that an approach which allows pupils to attend on certain days (on an ad-hoc basis) may not be possible to enable us to prepare a plan which is stable, consistent and sustainable.

Responses will be used to help decide how a safe return will be determined, as we work closely with our health and safety advisors to follow the Government advice on reducing risk. We will then advise you of finalised plans as soon as we are able.

I would like to thank all parents/guardians for their cooperation and support of the school during this challenging time. Whilst, we know that home schooling in itself presents problems, we are so impressed with how this has been handled. The teachers have loved receiving emails/messages of what the children have been up to and we've enjoyed seeing wonderful examples.

On a personal note, thank you for trusting the school to do its best for your children.

Following the survey, I will be in touch with clear details of how we will operate from June 1st 2020. If you require further information or have questions, please email me on head@fairfieldprimary.co.uk

Yours sincerely



Mr C J Steele
Headteacher

