

The Federation of Boldmere Schools

Cofield Road · Sutton Coldfield · B73 5SD

Our Vision: The Federation of Boldmere Schools empowers all children to embrace learning; achieve their personal best; and build their social, emotional and physical wellbeing.

18 May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to you following the government's announcement, which signalled the intent to allow more children from identified year groups to attend school after half term, subject to further scientific advice. The advice and guidance that has been issued by the Department for Education is constantly being updated since the government's announcement on 10 May. We are currently working through all updated information and it is certainly a challenge to keep up to speed with this.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and heartfelt thanks to you for the tremendous support you have given since we were asked to close our schools to all children except for a priority group of learners on the 23 March. These are certainly very challenging and strange times for us all. However, out of something bad, always comes something good, and a sense of community and appreciation of others, particularly our amazing NHS, has grown even stronger.

We understand the importance of continuing to do all that we can whilst prioritising the safety of our whole school community. Working in collaboration with a great deal of understanding will hopefully ensure that your child continues to receive all that they possibly need during this time when we cannot be together as a school community. I am well aware that recent school opening announcements and discussions that have followed, have raised a number of questions. I also know that there is a feeling of grave angst and concern from all concerned when discussing a return to school.

As mentioned previously, it goes without saying that first and foremost, the safety of your child and my staff is an absolute priority. At this stage there are still so many unknowns and we have much to do to plan for the possibility of a safe return to school for more identified children after half term.

The latest guidance states that all children from identified year groups have to be accommodated if their parents wish them to return to school. As a separate infant school, the government has prioritised a return for Nursery and Reception children first (**Year 1 are not prioritised in a separate infant school setting, this only applies to Primary Schools**). At the junior school, year 6 have been prioritised. This is all in addition to maintaining our current provision for children who have been continuously attending since the shutdown on 23 March. This is, of course, a limited offer and it will mean that many of our children will continue to learn from home under your care and guidance.

I must stress that the return to school is an ambition and I cannot guarantee that we will be able to open to all identified year groups until we are able to meet the safety measures that I know you would want and expect. In addition, we have a number of staff currently shielding. So as to ensure there is no ambiguity, the date specified by the Prime Minister is from 1 June 2020, please do not assume that should we be able to do so, that school provision will commence on that date. Further details on the return to Boldmere will be confirmed as soon as we are in a position to do so but the earliest we will be planning on returning to school, will be **week commencing the 8 June 2020** in line with a number of other Sutton schools.

Please be aware that school will definitely not be the same as before under the proposals to return. The children will be required to be placed in much smaller teaching groups. This will mean that some children will not have their usual teacher or be in their usual classroom. They will not be with their usual peers and will experience separate breaks and lunchtimes to reduce contact with other children. There will be no assemblies or opportunities for children to socialise across the whole school, which is a very different and alien way for us to work.

To try to move positively and deliver the government's ambition of wider return to school, I need to know how many parents in the target groups at Boldmere, wish their child to return. It is our intention that school will only be open full days from Mondays to Thursdays but only until lunchtime on Fridays. We will close to all but our current keyworker children by 12 midday on Fridays. This will give a longer period for school equipment that cannot be sanitised, to allow any possible contamination to dissipate.

I feel it is important to stress that especially with the youngest children, despite our best efforts to help them observe social distancing, we cannot guarantee this will happen in school and hope you appreciate the difficulties of trying to do this. I would also like to point out that the guidance clearly states that parents of eligible children, will **not be fined for non-attendance at this time.**

What we need now is a decision from parents in the government's target year groups, about whether you intend to send your child back to school in June or wish to keep them safe at home for a little longer. I hope that this lengthy letter will give you enough information to make that vital decision. Please note that if you do decide to send your child back to school, it is on the clear understanding that they will be in school on every one of their designated days. We are simply not in a position to offer part time provision.

Once I have an indication of pupil numbers, we will be in contact as soon as we have had the opportunity to work on the further details of our plans as guidance is being updated regularly. Please make your considered decision and **send an email to one of the following by 4 pm on Tuesday 19 May.**

for Nursery – schoolplacenursery@boldmere.bham.sch.uk

for Reception – schoolplacerec@boldmere.bham.sch.uk

for Year 6 – schoolplacey6@boldmere.bham.sch.uk

In your response, **please give your child's name and their current class** (Nursery children will only attend am or pm as currently, not the whole day). **You do not need to email if you do not require a school place** and if I have not had a reply by Tuesday at 4 pm, then I will assume that you do not wish your child to attend presently. We are aware that we have a few parents/carers who do not use Parentmail. For those parents/carers **only**, this letter will be sent in the post today. We would ask that they contact the school by telephone by Wednesday 20 May at 2 pm. Please also be aware that although the government have indicated their intention that this will happen, the re-opening to targeted year groups is subject to scientific clearance expected on 28 May 2020.

Finally, we know that there are many parents reading this who are not affected and who will be expected to continue to provide home schooling alongside the resources we are providing. Due to safety measures, and the guidance that is helping to inform our decisions on how we choose to operate during these challenging times, we will be unable to accommodate additional children other than those in the year groups detailed. We will not, therefore, be able to accept request for sibling places in other year groups.

Apologies again for the length of this letter. I sincerely hope I can count on your continued support and understanding during this very stressful time for us all. When emailing to request a school place, please only give us the details required. We do not have the capacity to be responding to lengthy emails, which

again we hope you understand. There are still so many things we do not know including the government's response to Teaching Union concerns of the return to school plans. We as a profession are asking the same questions as you and as of yet, we do not have all the answers.

As soon as we know pupil numbers, I will write again in due course with further information for those parents who wish their child to return to school, outlining the new arrangements that will have to be implemented strictly to keep the children and staff as safe as possible.

Yours sincerely

Mr C Glasgow
Executive Head Teacher

The Federation of Boldmere Schools:
Boldmere Infant and Nursery School and Boldmere Junior School
Executive Head: Mr Carl Glasgow
Telephone: 0121 464 2338/3656 Fax: 0121 464 4342/1344
Email: enquiry@boldmere-inf.bham.sch.uk / enquiry@bldmerej.bham.sch.uk