

Dear Parent/Carers,

I'm sure most of you will have seen or heard about the government announcement for schools to fully reopen on the 8th March. Whilst I'm sure this is welcomed news for some there will be some of you who are anxious about your child returning to school.

The past 12 months have been tough for all of us, the demands of this pandemic have also brought out the very best in a great many people and I'm particularly in awe of the way you as parents, carers and guardians of children have risen to the unique challenges with which you have been faced.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the teachers and support staff in our schools for their engaging and supportive teaching. They really have gone over and above every day to ensure children receive the best education they can.

I want to reassure you about the measures the Local Authority and Schools have taken to ensure your children can be safe. Schools are reviewing their covid Risk Assessments and ensuring, as much as possible, that pupils can remain in their bubbles. Staff in all our primary schools are being tested twice a week and they will continue to follow public health advice.

It is vital your child attends school to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the pandemic on their education, wellbeing and wider development. The usual rules on school attendance will apply from the 8th March including:

- Parents' duty to secure their child's regular attendance at school (where the child is a registered pupil at school, and they are of compulsory school age)
- The ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Pupils who are self-isolating because they are following public health advice should not attend school. Those pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) are also currently advised not to attend whilst shielding remains in place. If your child falls into one of these categories and is therefore not able to attend their school, they should receive remote education.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and if you require any further help or advice about your child's return please contact their school directly.

Paul Turner

Assistant Director of Children's Services (School Improvement & Special Educational Needs)

