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Letter to parents re announcement yesterday re wider opening of schools.

Dear parents and carers

I hope this letter finds you well? Sadly, the fine weather of the last few weeks seems to have deserted us for the moment!

I am writing to you following another announcement from the Government with regard to the opening of schools to a wider number of children. Tuesday they announced that there was now no plan to open the school to pupils in year 5.

I know a number of parents and pupils will be disappointed by this but the simple fact is that if the 2-metre social distancing is maintained we can only have classes of 12-15 pupils. The government has also stated that we cannot have rotas therefore there was no way either middle school could have had all of year 5 and 6 back for a month this term.

So, we must now turn our attention to what we can do for all of the pupils who will not be in school for the rest of the academic year. We are planning how we can have the pupils in years 5,7,8 and 9 back in school in some way before the end of the term. This is difficult because the government does not want us to do it but we know that it is the right thing to do. However, as I have said before this will not be for any normal form of teaching and will likely only be for one or two occasions.

We also need to keep reviewing and refining our online provision and we are doing that. I know it's not perfect and I know how hard everyone including, pupils, parents and staff find it but we all must keep working at it.

We are also acutely aware that we need to mark the end of the academic year for the year 8s in both schools and also have some form of meaningful transition for the year 8s and the year 4s joining us. This is not easy when again the government has given us clear instructions that pupils should not be attending schools for transition events. We are, however, mindful that we do need to put some form of transition package together and are presently working on this. I know you may be getting frustrated at not knowing things but we want to get things right before we share them with you.

On a positive note the year 6 pupils who are coming to school are doing incredibly well and the plans are all in place for the wider opening for years 10 and 12.

There are two other things I feel I must raise with you. First of these is that it is looking highly unlikely that school will be returning in any way normally in September. If the present guidelines around social distancing and class size remain in place, we are looking at small numbers of pupils being in school at any time. We are looking at what we can do and my hope is that we are able to have pupils in school as often as possible, but that is dependent on the government allowing us to have rotas of year groups in. It would be great if I could share with you plans by the end of this term but sadly, we have had no guidance yet at all from the government to let us know what they are wanting us to do. We will continue to update you when we can.

The second issue is around the provision of free school meals over the summer holiday. As it stands the government is proposing not to offer these. However numerous people are challenging them on this and we have done this as well. We do not make the decision; it is totally the government's choice; if we hear anything about what is happening, we will of course let you know.

I realise that so often I write to you saying what we cannot do and I am sorry about that. Believe me when I say that we want things to return to normal as quickly as possible and until they do, we will look at ways of supporting you and your children in these trying times. I hope that I can share with you some positive news about having more pupils in school soon.

Until then thank you for all you are doing and thank you to the young people of our schools, the majority of them are engaging so well with the online schooling and they are a credit to themselves and you.

As always please take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely



John Barnes
Executive Headteacher