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1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

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Dear Parents & Carers,

### COVID 19- Delayed gradual re-opening of Tor View School

Further to my letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020, as some of you will be aware, Lancashire County Council (LCC) have advised against schools re-opening for more children from 1<sup>st</sup> June. I have attached their communication to this letter as I feel that it clearly explains the reasons why a wider re-opening is not a sensible course of action at this moment in time.

Since we consulted with yourselves, we have been extremely busy preparing school for the wider re-opening, to accommodate all pupils wishing to return for two days per week maximum, scheduled to commence from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June.

However, in the light of the latest guidance from LCC, we will be following their advice and deferring from opening to extra pupils until it is fully safe to do so. **Key worker and vulnerable children who are currently due to attend from Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June will still attend as usual.**

I appreciate that some families will be disappointed, and this feeling is shared with myself and other staff across school. We have worked hard to minimize as much risk as possible and were looking forward to welcoming many of you back.

However, following consultation with The Sea View Trust, Governors, LCC and Unions, we cannot mitigate risks that are out of our control. At this stage, given the ever-changing nature of the situation, we are unable to provide a specific date for opening to more children.

School remains closed for staff training on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020 as previously communicated. This is to prepare staff so that when LCC confirm a date, we are ready to welcome you back to school as quickly as possible. As part of this process, we will be preparing information packs detailing what your child's school experience will be like on their return. We will share this when a date has been announced to assist with returning to school.



As soon as we have further information from LCC, it will be carefully considered, and we will of course keep you informed of developments as they arise. In the meantime, please stay safe and don't hesitate to contact your child's class teacher, our Parent Liaison Officer, Mrs Daly, or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Kindest regards



Mrs Louise Parrish- Headteacher

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## Advice to schools on reopening to more pupils

### Summary

Lancashire County Council is advising schools in the county not to open to more pupils from 1 June, but instead to continue with the current arrangements. This is because, in our assessment, we do not currently meet all five of the government's tests in Lancashire which would allow this decision to be taken safely.

We will regularly review the situation and provide further advice so that we can advise schools to open to more pupils as soon as we judge it safe to do so.

### Government advice for schools and parents

The government has released the following direction under scientific guidance regarding the re-opening of schools on 1 June:

- Nurseries and other early year providers, including childminders, are to begin welcoming back all children.
- Primary schools are to welcome back children in nursery (where they have them), reception, year 1 and year 6.
- Secondary schools, sixth form, and further education colleges are to begin some face to face support with year 10 and 12 pupils. We do not expect these pupils to return on a full-time basis at this stage.

### Local assessment

The government's five tests are outlined below:

- Protect the NHS's ability to cope. We must be confident that we are able to provide sufficient critical care and specialist treatment right across the UK.
- See a sustained and consistent fall in the daily death rates from Covid-19 so we are confident that we have moved beyond the peak
- See that the rate of infection is decreasing to manageable **levels** across the board, although we don't see the results of all tests in a timely manner. In addition, we are starting to see social distancing not being followed everywhere across the county which poses the risk of new cases to rise.
- Be confident that the range of operational challenges, including testing capacity and PPE, are in hand, with supply able to meet future demand.

- Be confident that any adjustments to the current measures will not risk a second peak of infections that overwhelms the NHS.

Locally, we are currently able to meet the requirements of the first three tests; however, we do not meet the requirements for the final two tests. The test and trace programme is not at a state of readiness to respond to Covid-19 community setting outbreaks in a timely manner, which poses a risk to school environments.

Furthermore, we are not confident that adjustments to the current measures of the lockdown policy will not risk a second peak of infections locally.

Consequently, our advice to schools is to not re-open to more pupils on June 1<sup>st</sup>, but to continue with their current support systems that are in place. The safety and wellbeing of children, their families, and school staff outweigh the benefits of opening schools of 1<sup>st</sup> June.

The key information supporting this advice is that:

- The current support system in schools for children of key workers and valuable children, which is how we describe our vulnerable children, is sufficient at this time. Additionally, safeguards are in place in Lancashire to support those children who are at risk in the community, and this support will continue.
- There has been no evidence of education outcomes worsening due to the effects of government lockdown policy.
- It is not going to be possible to implement social distancing in early years school settings.
- There is currently no evidence of widespread immunity in community settings.
- There is a significant risk that should outbreaks occur in school settings, the current system will not allow for tests to be conducted in a timely manner and therefore, the virus will continue to spread.

Schools will be kept well informed on a regular basis from the Director for Public Health in Lancashire and Lancashire County Council. We will regularly review the situation and provide further advice so that schools can re-open as soon as it is safe to do so.

In this challenging time, we recommend that everyone continue to follow the government advice of staying alert by:

- Staying at home as much as possible.
- Working from home if you can.
- Limit contact with other people.



- Keep a 2m distance from other people.
- Wash your hands regularly.

**Dr Sakthi Karunanithi**  
**Director of Public Health and Wellbeing**  
**Lancashire County Council**

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