



HOLMLEIGH PRIMARY
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5.6.20

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to explain our current status with regard to returning more children to school. As I said in my last letter, we all wish to see Holmleigh children back in school, yet we remain committed to increasing numbers of children attending only when it is safe.

The school decided, as did many other schools, that the situation at present led us to put the provisional starting date forward until June 15th at the earliest. This week and next we have been carrying out risk assessments and making alterations within the school environment to maximise safety. In doing so we have been mindful of the guidance from the local authority and the teaching unions as well as government, who have all agreed that each school will have to make its own arrangements as each school's circumstances are very different.

Our space is very limited. To achieve social distancing with older pupils (Y6 and Key Workers), desk arrangements within classrooms dictate a maximum of 8 children in the room.

With younger pupils (Nursery, Reception and Year 1), where it is acknowledged that social distancing is impossible to achieve, a maximum of 6 children per class can be accommodated.

In addition, we have to control movement around the school and playgrounds so that each group does not mix with any other group at any time.

The groups that we create should also ideally only work with the same staff each day in a '**social bubble**', and these groups, including staff, *should not mix with any other groups throughout the day*. In this way we aim to maintain the

integrity of each social bubble and limit the chances of any spread of infection within the school, and consequently out into the community.

However due to our staffing situation, this is not possible with all groups, and our older children will have to work with several other teachers as well as their designated group teachers.

- Our staffing situation is an important factor in deciding our provision over the coming weeks.
- Our team of education staff is normally 30.
- Of these, 12 are not able to work in school due to underlying health conditions.
- This leaves us with only 6.6 (full time equivalent) teachers and 9 other education support staff in school.

This impacts upon the number of groups and children that we will be able to safely accommodate.

We are planning to run 5 groups from June 15th at the earliest.

| Group | Maximum number of pupils |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Class 6a | 8 |
| Class 6b | 8 |
| Key Worker children | 8 |
| Rec/Y1 | 6 |
| Reception | 6 |

When I surveyed parent's choices a few weeks ago about returning their children to school, the numbers who replied YES were in line with the group numbers in the chart above.

We have therefore decided that from June 15th onwards the school can only invite those pupils who replied with a YES at that time. The only exception is Nursery, for whom we do not have enough staff at present.

There has been much talk about rotas. However, because we need to protect the integrity of the groups, we do not have enough staff to operate a rota and create more groups. We can only hope that as time passes the risk from COVID -19

will decrease and we can relax social distancing to increase the numbers in groups, or open up more groups.

To repeat, our current plan is to invite *only those pupils whose parents replied YES to the text message survey of a few weeks ago.*

Our start date, if safe, will be June 16th and pupils will attend for 3 days per week, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

These pupil's families will be contacted separately next week with details of safety requirements and other conditions.

Please do not attempt to return your child to school unless you receive a specific invitation to do so.

Teachers will continue to send work home or to make it available for collection. I hope that you are managing at this difficult time and urge you, in the interest of the whole community, to remain mindful of the need to take precautions against infection. As ever we look forward to the time when we will be able to welcome everyone back to work and school.

Finally, I am delighted to inform you that Ms Innie had her baby, a girl, on June 2nd. Both Mum and baby are home and well!

Best wishes

Mr Ward
Head Teacher
Holmleigh School