Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, thank you for all your kind messages and support at what has been an incredibly hard time for us all, not least you at home. Many of you are juggling trying to provide a school day at home while juggling with your own work and working from home. It has not been easy and we understand from all our staff who are juggling work with educating their own children at home, the challenges you have faced. Parents and teachers, at least as far as education is concerned are more than ever, in it together.

Secondly, I want to assure you that we, as much as you, are very much looking forward to seeing children back in school. I can assure you that our staff are all wanting to be back, educating your children and recreating and re-developing our school and its culture in response to the current crisis. A crisis that looks likely to be with us for a prolonged period of time. This is not a short term fix and we are planning for long term adaptations to how we are, still useful and kind, still caring for ourselves, others and the environment while also mindful that we will all have to unlearn decades of habits and ways of being. We will not be down on the floor at children’s level or singing indoors for now, but these important, if not essential things, will return in due course. We will need to be together and think differently in order to keep all our school community: children, staff and you at home, as safe as we can. Plans are in progress and have been for some time for how we might reopen.

The Prime Minister provided some information about the government’s expectations on Sunday evening, followed with some detail on Monday evening and further detail and information on Tuesday evening. There was further DfE guidance following through today However, I am not in a position to give you lots of detail yet. We need further information and to discuss further as a whole staff, leadership team and school governors. It is important that you get reliable and clear information rather than make premature pronouncements that leave you with more questions than answers and that lack clarity

What I can say is that or current priority is planning for classes of 15 in Reception, Year 1 and 6. This will give us valuable experience to then plan for and welcome everyone back safely when that time comes.

[You can also read the government advice for parents here](https://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fpublications%2Fclosure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers%2Freopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNGZk9qmkCTnnNA78PG2X6YIzh-3Ug" \t "_blank).

There have been some very unhelpful and inaccurate reports in some corners of the media and I have been saddened and disappointed by these. For one thing, far from our school being closed or ‘on holiday’, we have been open every day since lockdown, five days a week including all holidays and bank holidays for key workers’ children . We have shopped weekly and packed family boxes for our families who need them at this time supporting local business. Therefore the last thing any of us need right now are attempts by unscrupulous people to drive division between schools and families and turn people against each other. One thing this crisis has shown us is that we are and can be a better society than that.

More recently, I have noted comments regarding our teaching unions. I have been on many virtual meetings with my own union, the NAHT. During this time the overwhelming bulk of discussion and advice has not been about school staff but about children, their welfare and best interests; the NEU and other unions have had very similar focus. We can care for children and keep them safe and feeling safe but must do this with regard and consideration for the our staff who care for them. People sowing seeds of division and suspicion for their own reasons is at best, unhelpful. A lack of consultation, clarity and the very short timescales mean our unions are reflecting genuine high levels of anxiety and concern for our children and the staff who care for them.

I am confident we can and will reopen safe enough for staff and children alike when we can. I am confident we can continue to develop and build a school focused not just on managing and surviving the current crisis but on improvement and thriving too. But this can only happen if we have trust and respect for one another. This is the spirit in which have provided the online learning, respecting all your different situations and home. It’s how we’ll respect your decision about returning to school.

I am confident we can continue to rely on your support. I will write to you again in due course, as soon as I can give you greater clarity on the arrangements.

Kind regards,

Sandra Isherwood