

Seghill First School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, I hope this letter finds you and your family feeling well and in good health. You have all been missed hugely by those of us working at school and from home. Continuing to see and hear from you regularly via emails, Facebook, Tapestry and School360 has been a delight – very often it has made our day.

We now find ourselves being asked to plan and organise school being open to a number of children from 01 June (Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6) and eventually all year groups before the end of the academic year. I have not received any guidance on whether this means Year 4 for us as a first school rather than Year 6. I am seeking clarification on this.

Now that the government has published 'clearer' plans (they were published last night at 8:20pm) I will continue to work with staff and governors to see how we can make that work safely at our school. At present I don't know what that will look like practically for you as parents and families, but I will get that information to you as soon as possible.

What I can offer you now is an overview and summary of some of the points from last night's government guidance. The weeks to come are going to be as much about you preparing as a family for these possible changes, as us preparing as a school.

Which year groups can come back to school from 01 June?

From the 01 June we have been asked to 'try' and provide provision for:

- Key Worker children (all year groups);
- Vulnerable children (particularly those with Education Health and Care Plans and/or a social worker);
- Nursery children;
- Reception children;
- Year 1 children;
- Year 6 children- this may mean Year 4 for us?

If your child does not fall into one of the categories above, they must continue to learn from home using School360. This includes siblings of eligible children. I appreciate this may well cause considerable inconvenience for some families; in this respect your patience would be much appreciated – we didn't write the guidance!

If my child is eligible, do they have to attend school?

You will no doubt be wondering where you stand as parents and carers in relation to attendance. The new guidance says the following:

- No one with Covid-19 symptoms should attend a setting for any reason.
- Eligible children – including priority groups - are strongly encouraged to attend, unless they are self-isolating or they are clinically vulnerable (in which case they should follow medical

advice).

- If someone in your household is extremely clinically vulnerable, they should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, and the child is able to understand and follow those instructions. This could prove to be very difficult.
- Families should notify us as normal if their child is unable to attend so that staff can explore the reason with them and address barriers together.
- Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time, and schools and colleges will not be held to account for attendance levels.

Ultimately, as parents you have parental responsibility for your child. Having taken into account this information and read our plan (which will follow as soon as possible) you will need to decide what you think is best for the health and well-being of your child. We will of course support you in that decision.

What measures are schools being asked to put in place to keep my child and staff safe?

First of all, we are being asked to carry out a thorough risk assessment to try and minimise any potential risks to your children and staff. To minimise risks, we have been asked to focus on:

- cleaning and hygiene routines;
- reducing class sizes to 15 – if there is a shortage of teachers your child's class group will be taught by another teacher or supervised by a teaching assistant, who in turn will be directed by a teacher;
- looking at classroom layouts, making them as spacious as possible and removing unnecessary items;
- trying to keep children 2 metres apart – even in the guidance the Department for Education have acknowledged this will be very difficult;
- minimising the interaction between different groups of staff and children within school;
- staggering pick up / drop off, breaks and lunches.
- routines for pick up and drop off - only allowing one adult per child / family.

We have not been advised to use PPE equipment, such as masks etc, unless your child requires intimate care or is showing symptoms of Covid-19 within school.

So that is the headline information. I'm sure you'll agree that's lots to take in. As I said, over the next few days we will be working very hard as a staff team, along with governors and the local education authority, to turn this guidance into a detailed plan that works for us as a community at Seghill First School. We will share our plans with you when they are ready. They will be unique to us; we will follow the guidance but what we will be able offer may look different from other schools due to each school having a unique building and associated set of benefits and potential risks.

I will be sending out a survey to parents of children in Nursery, Reception and Year 1 later today or tomorrow. I would be grateful for your responses by the weekend if possible.

Please be assured that every step possible will be taken to minimise potential risks to your child and family. We will do everything we can to keep us all safe and well.

Yours sincerely

Tracey Chappell
Headteacher

Steph Hall
Chair of governors