



22nd May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

The following letter contains a range of important information that updates everyone on the current position and plans moving forwards.

Kendal Collaborative Partnership:

In this extremely challenging period, all Kendal Headteachers have been meeting electronically to discuss the proposed reopening of schools to those students not already attending. All Headteachers have shared their individual schools' plans and, recognising the differences in situation, size and pupil numbers, are fully supportive of each other's plans. There was an extremely clear agreement that the issues associated with the reopening to specific year groups, possibly around the start of June, made this an incredibly difficult situation to manage for everyone and that it would be impossible to do this to the satisfaction of everyone. The phased reopening of each school meant a wide range of associated pressures – lack of clear guidance, health and safety considerations, protecting children, staff and families of all involved / attending and the continued provision of learning for those unable to attend mean comprehensive and detailed plans need to be in place before any schools can proceed in line with the Government's wishes. This is further exacerbated by the high regional cases of COVID-19 associated with Cumbria and, more specifically, the Barrow and South Lakes areas.

Every Headteacher agreed that plans would continue to be made in consultation with staff, Governors, all other school stakeholders and additional, relevant organisations, but also that all plans would be developed with the understanding that further clear scientific evidence was required. Plans would need to be flexible due to guidance being issued or amended with little or no notice and, most importantly, that the mental health, well-being and safety of all is to be the number one consideration when making final plans and decisions.

The latest advice is that schools should be extending the current provision to welcome children from the new Key Worker lists expected on 31st May and new vulnerable children as per the LA Hierarchy for opening to groups of children. Therefore, these groups would be in order:

- Vulnerable children (who have been attending so far)
- Children of key workers (who have been attending so far)
- NEW key workers' children
- NEW vulnerable children
- The wider age groups (i.e. Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6)

In addition to the above, we are now of the shared opinion that setting precise dates for schools to start their phased 'reopening' has been made impossible. This is due to the logistics required for any schools' plans to be finalised (social distancing, educational provision, risk assessments required, other health and safety issues and many other factors). The proposed dates for Government approval, or not, such as their decision whether their reopening wishes proceed as planned, are being made on the 28th of May, and possible changes to key workers lists 'by' the 31st of May mean we are now of the clear shared opinion that late changes could impact all plans made.

All Headteachers are now proceeding with the approach that we will reopen when it is safe to do so. Any return date needs to be based on data indicating it is safe and also must be supported by the 'Test, Track and Trace' system being implemented as planned and clearly evidenced as working properly and effectively.

The above is all subject to further approval with individual Governing Bodies and the Local Education Authority.

Finally, please be aware that we know many parents would like their children to return to school as soon as possible. We all support this view as soon as it is clearly safe to do so and hope that the clarity provided above is understood by all.

Yours sincerely,

Headteachers from:

Castle Park School

Ghyllside Primary School

Heron Hill Primary School

St Mark's C E Primary School

St Thomas's C E Primary School

St Oswald's C E Primary School

Dean Gibson R C Primary School

Crosthwaite C E Primary School

Vicarage Park C E Primary

Grayrigg C E Primary School

Stramongate Primary School