

CASTLESIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Enjoy life, learning and sharing



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Dear Parents and Carers,

Potential School Reopening

Following the government's announcement on Sunday, we are writing to update you with regards to the potential reopening of schools, as we all deal with the challenging circumstances of this pandemic and the impact that it is having on us all.

Our preference is of course for all of our schools to find a way of opening again to our pupils, but our first priority must be that this is safe and manageable so that you (and staff) can have confidence in our planning and approach. We are currently discussing ways forward and will be guided by further information from the Department of Education, Durham Local Authority and the Unions.

We understand that the current uncertainties may be causing some anxiety and that many of you may not wish for your child to return at this time. Some may be shielding, deemed as vulnerable or feel that their child is safer at home. In the following few months, **parents will be best placed to make this decision and the government have advised that there will be no legal or monitoring processes for attendance.**

Moving forward, there are a number of vital factors to be taken into consideration. As an example, we must consider how much of our school buildings can be cleaned to the standards required and therefore how many areas and classrooms we can safely open. This in addition to other health and safety risk factors will limit the numbers of pupils we can have in school at any one time.

Information taken from current government advice means that we can predict the following:

- Children will be placed in classes with no more than 8 children (we can accommodate 8 per room at most)
- It may be that your child will not have their usual teacher
- It may be that your child will not have their usual classroom
- Classrooms will look and operate very differently as we have been advised to remove all potential risks of contamination (soft furnishings/Lego/construction etc)
- We will need to reorganise classes into smaller groups so your child may not be with their closest friends
- Start and finish times may differ for each class
- Children will not be allowed to mix with other classes due to the need for social distancing
- We will operate a recovery curriculum where children will be supported with their emotional wellbeing in the first instance
- If a parent chooses not to send their child to school, they will not be penalised in any way



- If there is a confirmed case of Covid-19 within the class, the whole class will be told to self-isolate at home for 14 days

Schools will be very different to what they were before the lockdown and children will need to be supported to understand this.

It is likely that a phased return will begin with children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 over a gradual period of time. We will then be able to discuss if and how we are able to invite additional year groups back in to school by regular review of the risk assessments.

Please also note that school will still be open to our most vulnerable children and those of key workers. As soon as we have more information, we will update you as to the next steps.

Thank you for your continued support, patience and understanding during these confusing and worrying times.

Take care and stay safe.

Alison Spence

