



Harwell Community Primary School

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Dear parents,

I hope you and your loved ones are safe and well.

Following on from my email on Monday, I would like to reiterate my thanks for your ongoing patience and understanding; staff at school really appreciate your messages of good wishes and support, including those sent following my communication Monday; they really help when we are facing such difficult times.

As you will no doubt know, on Sunday the government announced that children in Foundation, Y1 and Y6 should return to school at the start of next term. We are currently planning whether this is possible and how to manage this safely; as I hope you would expect, the safety of children, parents and staff is at the centre of our thinking as we look to find a workable path forward.

At this point, I want to be clear with you that, when children return, we will not be able to implement social distancing in the way it is currently understood. With the relatively small number of children currently in, this has been shown to be near impossible to achieve.

While we should be able to implement a number of control measures – some one-way movement around school, separation of children into groups, regular and thorough deep-cleaning of classrooms and work areas, emphasising the importance of hygiene and hand-washing to children – the government acknowledge that ‘early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff’.

While we will do our best to implement as many measures as we can, I know this will be of concern to many of you, and I want to be open and honest about this from the outset.

In addition, the need to split children into groups of around 15 pupils means that, should a return be possible, there is a strong possibility they will not be taught by their usual class teacher and/or Teaching Assistant. Start and end times for the day will need to be staggered to limit the number of adults accessing the site at any one point, so it may be that your child’s time at school each day or

each week is shorter than usual; this is likely to mean a part-time return at first. I appreciate and regret this will inevitably affect plans for your own work.

Please be assured we all want children to return to school as soon as it is safely possible. As a headteacher and parent, I understand and value the many benefits of education and feel this period of absence very keenly.

However, as I value the open and honest relationship that school staff and I share with all of you, I want to be clear that school will look different on the initial return of children. This is to avoid any concerns emerging further into the process of welcoming our pupils back.

I know from a number of informal discussions, many families have mixed feelings about school's reopening at this time; some families are happy to return whilst others are not happy for children to return to school, given the issues I have outlined. The government guidance has stated that parents will not be penalised for their child's non-attendance at this time.

I would be grateful if you could use this form to indicate your thinking, views and wishes to help our planning. Please note that your opinion as expressed will not be considered binding. As plans unfold, I am sure your views might change – this is also fine. However, getting a rough idea of your thoughts at the moment will be helpful with our plans for how to structure any return to school that I am able to organise.

I would be grateful if you could complete this form by **Monday 18th**; I apologise for the quick turnaround on this, but your help is appreciated.

<https://forms.gle/9g4g1WfPDnw7b6jbA>

In the meantime, please keep in touch through the usual methods should you have additional questions.

Thank you again for your continued support and understanding.

Warm regards,

Bryn Gibson
Headteacher