

London Borough of Havering
Main Road, Romford RM1 3BD

email: CouncillorRobert.Benham@havering.gov.uk

Our Ref:

Date: 22 May 2020

Dear Parent / Carer,

Coronavirus (Covid-19) – Phased Reopening of Schools

I hope you and your family are safe and well at this difficult time.

Thank you for your continued support to the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Being at home with your child(ren), and supporting their continued learning alongside your own work will be a significant challenge at this unprecedented and worrying time.

Many of you will have heard the Prime Minister setting out the government's position that, as well as schools continuing to being open to vulnerable children and the children of critical workers, a phased re-opening of schools could begin from 1st June at the earliest. This would begin with pupils in nurseries, reception, year one and year six.

Secondary Schools and Alternative Providers will also be planning their approach to offering some face-to-face time for pupils and we are working with Special Schools on their plans to increase gradually the number of children and young people on site, again from the 1st June at the earliest.

The government is clear that all arrangements will remain under regular review, and will happen only if the level of new infections continues to decrease among other conditions.

We are working with schools to support their plans for a gradual and phased re-opening. A full health and safety risk assessment, taking in to account staffing levels and their physical capacity on the school site, will guide their plans.

The safety of everyone in the school community is the most important thing for us in all of this. We all want to get more pupils back into school as soon as it is safe to do so because school is the best learning environment for our children. However, in supporting schools to re-open in a phased and gradual way, the first priority to consider will be the health and well-being of all pupils, their families and school staff.

Although all schools are working hard to respond to the guidance sent by the Department for Education, some primary, infant and junior schools may not be able to offer full time provision for the relevant year groups, and any new arrangements

may not be introduced exactly from the 1st June. Each school will need to think carefully about the guidance and respond to its own individual circumstances.

With any return to school, there will be noticeable differences. Children will be in smaller groups to reduce the risk of infection and they may not be in their usual class group or classroom or with their usual teacher. The curriculum will also be different as in order to prevent the spread of the virus not all resources will be available.

How children may attend school may also change. The return may be staggered with other year groups being brought back at different times. Children may not be able to attend every day, and the timings of the school day may also be changed to avoid parents congregating and putting themselves at risk. Home school activities will still be planned to children continuing with home learning,

In all of this, all school attendees – parents and carers, pupils and siblings and staff – will need to continue to observe all guidance about infection prevention and control, including the regular handwashing regime that was in place before the closure.

Schools will be talking to you about the offer and response that they are able to make based on the health and safety risk assessment that they have completed.

It is not compulsory for parents to send their children to school at this time, and I am clear there will be no penalties if you choose to keep your child(ren) at home. All schools will continue to provide a home-learning offer to all pupils not accessing support on site, and will keep in regular touch with the families of all pupils, whether or not they are attending school.

You can find more information in the attached government guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

I assure you that Havering Council is working closely with all our schools to offer a consistent and safe response to the proposed plans, and the health and safety of children, their families and staff remains everyone's first priority during this period.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please do contact your school in the first instance.

Thank you for your continued co-operation at this time.

Kind regards,



Cllr Robert Benham
Deputy Leader of the Council
Cabinet Member for Education, Children & Families