

Thursday 21st May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Further to the letter sent by our CEO on Friday 15th May, I wanted to update you on our plans.

Currently we have around 10% of the students attending the site, on a 2, 3 or 5 day timetable. In some cases, these are part days rather than full days.

We will continue to speak to each family at least once per week and make decisions about students coming back into school on an individual basis.

We are using the following **criteria** to make these decisions, so please talk to staff about your views and needs:

- Children of critical workers, or those who need their child to attend school so they can return to work under government guidelines
- Children who have a social worker, where the social worker agrees that the child should be in school
- Children who would benefit from time out of the home, for mental health and specific physio related well-being reasons

You know your children best, and we want you to feel confident in the decision to send your child back to school. Whilst we may encourage you to send your child to school if we feel this is in their best interests, we will not insist on it if you remain concerned about the risk of Covid 19 to your child.

If your child or a member of your household falls into the 'Extremely Clinically Vulnerable' category, and has received a letter from the doctor, they should **not** attend school. We are working closely with public health and they are monitoring which students attend school so they can advise on individual cases if required.

We will be taking a **series of preventative measures** to reduce the risk of transmission of Covid 19. These include:

- Desks placed at least 2 metres apart for those student who work at desks
- Limited numbers of students in classrooms and accessing transport at the same time.
- Social distancing signage and symbols will be displayed around school to offer regular reminders to all students and staff.
- Institute a one-way system in areas of the school that see greater movement of people
- The Purchase of non-contact thermometers to check the temperature of staff and students (with your agreement) where necessary
- All staff and students to wash their hands for 20 seconds, with soap and water, on arrival to school, and regularly throughout the day

- Reduced numbers of students in school. When your child returns to school, they will attend for 2,3 or 5 days per week, or part days, depending on individual circumstances
- The school day will be either 9:30am - 2pm, or 10-2:30pm - this allows additional time for thorough cleaning each evening, and for staff to prepare materials and resources each morning to prevent the need to move throughout the building during the day
- Students will remain with the same staff in the same room(s) throughout the day. Surfaces, door handles and key areas will be wiped regularly, and each room will be thoroughly cleaned each afternoon. Where a room is used by more than one group, e.g. the hall or food room, these will be cleaned before the next group accesses the room. It is our aim for students to have their lunches in their classrooms, but this will be reviewed as and when required.
- Breaks will be staggered, so that large groups are not accessing the same outdoor areas
- Learning opportunities will be structured differently, as subject specialists will not be able to teach every child. Staff supervising each group will plan activities aimed to keep the group engaged and settled, to avoid the need for students to leave the room / more staff to enter. The safety of all members of the school community will always take priority over academic progress
- Students (where possible) will be educated alongside students who they have travelled to and from school with the aim of keeping groups of children together in 'bubbles' throughout the day.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is available on site for staff, however the government does not recommend that face masks are worn in school. If a member of staff or student chooses to wear a face covering, this will be permitted providing they can do so safely.

Should a child require personal or intimate care throughout the day we will continue to provide this in a safe and professional manner. We will follow our usual hygiene procedures and protocols ensuring consistency for the children in our care. Children who need high levels of specialist adult care and close contact will continue to receive this support.

Should a child's behaviour require that physical intervention is used in order to keep them and everyone else safe, PPE may be used to protect all parties. Where a child requires regular or frequent physical intervention, we will liaise with parents/carers and other professionals involved to reduce the associated risks. This may mean that you are asked to collect your child early from school, or that their individual timetable is modified. Where a child's behaviour repeatedly puts other people at risk, other arrangements will have to be made, and we will work with other services and the local authority to provide the most effective remote education possible. Please note, we do not expect such incidents, as incidents that require physical interventions are very rare at Abbey Hill. However, it is important that you understand our arrangements should a child need additional, physical support.

All staff, students and their families are instructed to follow the social distancing rules outlined by the government. If your child is not following these rules outside school, please be honest with staff in school and allow us to keep all members of the school community safe by keeping your child at home.

We are in communication with the local authority to ensure there is communication with parents/carers about the measures taken on transport to reduce the risks of transmitting infection. Please note, that community transport are only able to transport a limited number of students per bus and have a reduced number of personal assistants available to work on buses which impacts upon how many students can access school.

Please continue to encourage good hygiene for your child - encourage them to cough into a tissue and dispose of it; ensure regular handwashing. For children who rely on adult support for all aspects of personal hygiene we will endeavour to support our children in school, however it is important to stress that there will be risk. Please ensure your child washes their hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water before leaving the house each morning and when they arrive home each afternoon. We thoroughly recommend that your child's clothes are washed as soon as they get home, and alternative outfit is made available for the following day at school. Therefore, there is no expectation that uniform will be worn during Summer Term 2.

All children and staff attending school are able to be tested for Covid 19 if they develop symptoms. Please let school know at the earliest opportunity of your child develops symptoms, and we will provide support for you to arrange a test if you need it. If a child or member of staff tests positive for Covid 19, we will take the necessary measures and inform you.

We will continue to provide learning resources at home for times when your child is not attending school. Please check the school website and social media regularly for updates on this.

The advice remains the same, where your child is safer at home and is able to access home learning opportunities, we advise that they continue to do so. Where individual circumstances mean that your child would benefit from being in school, please let us know.

It is important to note that we will do our very best to minimise the risk of infection, however, we can only do this with a significantly reduced cohort of students. Therefore, please consider the criteria set out in this letter before making any formal decisions. As a school, our priority will be to keep students and staff safe at all times. This means we will have to make decisions and consider each individual situation before agreeing a place in school for a child.

If you have any questions or concerns about any of the above, please contact the school or discuss them with staff during your weekly phone calls.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes to you and your family.



Rebecca Whelan
Principal