

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

I thought that I would write to you following the government's latest updates regarding schools. The Prime Minister previously gave a brief insight into the roadmap for the gradual lifting of social isolation. Part of the update referred to the education sector. I wanted to clarify what our approach is at Maplewell, with the emphasis continuing to be on reducing the spread of the virus and the health and wellbeing of all children and adults.

Although the update mentioned year 10 and year 12 students potentially returning to school by 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020, this only applies to secondary schools. There has been a particular update referring to special schools. It states:

**special schools, special post-16 institutions and hospital schools to work towards a phased return of more children and young people without a focus on specific year groups and informed by risk assessments.**

We have been anticipating this news and I want to assure you that we have already been planning intensely. We have extensive risk assessments in place for the school population and have continued with the process of updating individual risk assessments, in collaboration with parents, carers and other professionals. We will continue to discuss students on an individual basis and continue to update their weekly risk assessments when deciding which students will be asked to return to school. We anticipate these numbers to remain low, as the threat of contracting Covid 19 remains high for the whole of the population.

A thorough risk assessment of the school, including teaching spaces, staffing, social times, toileting and arrival and departure to and from school and social distancing will be in place. I ask that you work with us in helping to keep the numbers in school to a low number to help reduce the risk for everyone.

I am aware that the anxiety levels of students and staff will be heightened during these unprecedented times and am keen to help our school community feel reassured. You will have noticed that part of our approach is to educate staff and students about what safe social distancing looks like. We are reminding people of the need to keep 2 metre distance at all times, during lesson and social times. Mr Palmer is preparing an assembly on this subject. The more reminders that we all have regarding social distancing the better as far as I am concerned. We are all learning what the new 'normal' is. This will be key in school. If we cannot guarantee this, we will have to consider personal protective equipment, something that would not help to alleviate anxieties and something that I am trying to avoid.

We have separated the school into 'bubbles', where children will be taught by the same group of staff and have access to dedicated toilet blocks. Additional measures have been put into place for social and lunch times.

Our risk assessment have informed which students will be invited to school first. We are awaiting updates from county transport and will then communicate our plans at the start of next week.

School will not be open during the half-term break.

Kind regards

Jason Brooks

Headteacher