

18th June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to let you know about the arrangements for the end of this term and beyond at Gade Valley. The current situation is still uncertain and ever-changing - which I know is not very helpful for anyone. Whenever government announcements are made, you will hear them at exactly the same time as the school which makes it difficult to create a clear plan in a quick timeframe. Furthermore, once announcements are made, there is rarely immediate guidance for schools or guidance that has any clarity. Although this is extremely frustrating, we are remaining positive, getting on with it, and trying to make decisions that benefit our school community – I thank you again for all of your support and patience.

Phase Two wider opening - June 29th – end of term

Currently we are in the extension stage of Phase One reopening. This means that we have small groups of pupils (bubbles) from key worker parents, Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Parents of these designated groups have been asked twice (at the beginning of Phase One and the beginning of the extension) if they would like their children to return and we have been able to accept their requests. The current number of children we have is 72 and we feel that safety measures are in place that minimise risks to pupils, staff and parents.

In regards to wider school opening, the guidance says:

We know that in some primary schools, there will be capacity to welcome more children back, in group sizes of no more than 15, before the summer holidays. This may be because, since 1 June, take-up amongst eligible children is lower than expected, or because there is additional space still available within the school and available staff to teach and supervise. There is no expectation on primary schools to welcome back additional children where they do not have capacity to do so, and they should only do so where they can accommodate more children while still following the approaches set out in this guidance and their own risk assessment. Where schools have capacity, they may choose to welcome back additional pupils. It is up to schools to decide which pupils to prioritise, based on their knowledge of their children and communities.

Therefore, for the start of Phase Two (from June 29th), the school will be sending a survey, early next week, to parents of pupils in Year 2, 3, 4 and 5: this will help us to make decisions for wider opening. At this stage it is likely that we can offer some provision to additional pupils in some/most/all of these Year groups, but at this time can give no further details of what this provision will be. The aim has always been to have as many children as possible safely back before September – even if this is for a drastically reduced timetable such as one day a week. Please note that the current ‘bubble’ groups will not change for the duration of the term, and that we will now be giving priority to pupils in Year 2, 3, 4 and 5 for Phase Two.

September Opening

As of yet, we have not received any guidance for the next academic year. We are very hopeful that we can have all children back on a full-time timetable as soon as it is deemed safe to do so. As soon as we know more about this, I will of course communicate it to you. As there is still much uncertainty, I am waiting for as long as possible to communicate decisions for next year, this will include teaching staff, class allocations, changes to the curriculum and changes to procedures. We do intend to share via a video, who the children will have as their teaching staff for next year before we break up. In other daily briefings, we will share any changes the children may experience. The feedback on the daily briefings has been positive and we are glad that the children find it useful.

Reports

This year, you will receive your reports by e-mail. These will be sent in the final two weeks of term. There will be some differences to the usual format and this will be explained when you receive your child's report.

Take care,

Mr Barron