

Update for Parents

13th May 2020

Dear all,

I am writing to you all again so soon, as since Monday morning things have shifted nationally again. The proposal from the Government is that they now hope some part time face to face contact will begin with Years 10 and 12 from 1st June as well, rather than later in the term, and they hope all primary pupils to return before the summer.

We received on Monday evening the guidance provided for schools on how to prepare for this but, I am afraid, there are still many unanswered questions. Please be assured that I, the Governors, the Leadership team and all staff at CFS are working tirelessly to make our way through this and to ensure that we continue to keep all staff and children safe, as far as it is within our power to do so. There is a huge amount to navigate before 1st June and, whilst I appreciate you are keen to know exactly what is happening, I am writing to you today to ask for your patience. This is going to take time, but we are making good progress and are already exploring our risk assessment, potential new timetable and altered layout of the School. But I am afraid there will be no concrete plans from us before next week at the very earliest and, whilst I hope to be able to give you far more clarity next week, this does of course depend heavily on how things progress nationally over the coming days.

That said, there are a few things I can share with you now.

Firstly, please find here the [guidance released by the Government](#). This is well worth reading as a parent, but please be mindful that all schools will have to approach things differently depending on their context.

There have already been a few, understandable questions, that I can answer for you now:

Will Years R, 1 and 6 and some face to face contact for Years 10 and 12, definitely be happening from 1st June?

No. Firstly, as the Government guidance outlines, this will only be permitted nationally if certain measures are met in regard to the progression of the virus. However, it is also important to say now that, even if a date is confirmed by the Government, it will still depend on each individual school's ability to implement the guidance, staff the school, and ensure that everyone is safe. Until we are confident that we can do this through our comprehensive planning and risk assessment, we are unable to say if we will definitely open this term to any pupils. We are working hard, I hasten to add, to put all the measures in place but some aspects, such as staffing (we have many teachers who will still need to be in self isolation after 1st June), are simply beyond our control.

If schools do reopen for these year groups, do I have to send my child in?

No. The Government guidance clearly states that you are 'strongly encouraged' to send your children in, but also outlines that if your child is shielding or living with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable, they should not attend. I also understand that for many of you this will simply feel too early. No fines will be issued for non attendance before the summer holidays.

In order to help us with our planning we may very soon be surveying families to get an understanding of how many children would return to school if we reopened between 1st June and the summer holiday, in the relevant year groups. But I feel this would be too soon to ask this question as you may feel you don't currently have enough information to make this decision.

Will it be 'normal' school for these year groups if they are allowed back?

No. I am afraid not. Class sizes will be reduced and children will not be able to mix with children in other classes – creating separate groups within the school. This does of course mean that your child is likely to not be with their normal teacher/teachers, and not all their peers and friends. Break times will be staggered, lunch provision likely to be limited to cold food, and day start and end times altered and staggered between year groups. We will not be delivering the full broad and balanced curriculum and, in Years 10 and 12, the face to face contact will be part time and supporting continued remote learning. The exact details are of course what we are currently working out.

It is also important to point out that whatever we put in place may need to be altered if we then open up to all primary year groups; if it is still advised to have smaller class sizes than we will not be able to accommodate all primary children every day due to space and staffing limitations, even in an all through school.

Will the childcare provision continue for children of key workers in other year groups?

Yes. Although, as always, this is always as far as staffing will allow. If we are open to other year groups, however, we will need to alter the provision to be based in a different part of the school with different members of staff. We would still only be able to support children of key workers and vulnerable children. I appreciate how difficult this is – the Government have told you to go back to work if possible, with very little notice and with very little increase of childcare provision. But, in order to be able to maintain the provision for key workers we need to be very strict on this. We have seen an expected increase of the number of children attending childcare in the past couple of days. Again, I do understand that this has been sprung on us all last minute, but please can we ask that you do try to inform us in advance if you are planning to send your child in so that we can ensure we have enough staff available. A reminder that you will need proof of your key worker ID if you are sending your child in for the first time.

Can I also take this opportunity to say that we currently feel we will be unable to open for childcare provision over half term, in the same we did over Easter, as intensive site work needs to take place in order to prepare the School for potential reopening. We will be in touch as soon as possible about this,

and WSCC may provide alternative provision, but I wanted to be honest with you now so that you can begin to plan.

If the School partially reopens, will remote learning be continuing for all the other year groups? And what about the children in Years R, 1, 6, 10 and 12, that I have decided to keep at home?

For all other year groups yes. Maintaining our remote school provision throughout the rest of this term is vital and something that we are considering alongside all of our other plans. Our intention is that there will be no changes to Years 2-5, and Years 7-9 and Year 11 in terms of the work set, although for the primary year groups we would no longer be able to guarantee that your child's normal class teacher would be the one setting the work as they may need to be in school staffing smaller class sizes. We would have a dedicated team for the remote learning, but this would be a change from the teachers you have currently been working with. For Years 10 and 12, we will continue to set a huge amount of the work remotely as the in-school provision will be simply to support this. In Years R, 1 and 6 we are hoping to be able to set *some* remote learning for those children who are remaining at home, but I hope you understand that this wouldn't be able to be at the same level as before due to staff providing provision in school as well.

Will my child be safe returning to school this term?

This is of course the most important question and one I currently simply cannot answer. Obviously it is our absolute wish to be able to answer this positively, and we will only open the School to any year group once we are able to do so. I am an educational expert, not a health expert, and that is me being completely honest with you. But we are working closely with advisors, other schools, health professionals and will work closely with you as parents as we move forward. One thing I can say is that, whatever we put in place, it will not be possible to properly social distance children whilst in school.

I said at the start that I am asking one thing of you and that is patience. Forgive me, but I am going to end by asking one more thing. All headteachers, teachers and school staff always have the best interests of your children at heart. If any school says that something is not possible, even if it appears possible for the school down the road, then please trust that it is not possible. We will all be thinking through all the options and there will be genuine reasons why we are or are not able to do things, and sometimes we may not be able to share those specific reasons with you. Please continue to support us as with navigate this next chapter.

With continued best wishes

Mrs Louise New

Principal