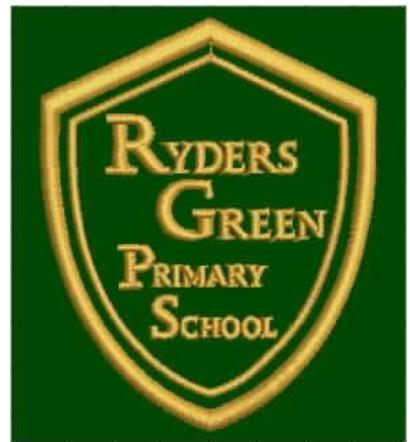


Ref:- LB/mb

19th May 2020



Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope that you are all staying safe and are as well as can be in these exceptional circumstances. We would like to thank you all for your continued efforts to do the best you can to support your children with their learning.

We are writing to share how we will begin to open our schools for more children, hopefully, on June 1st. We have already gathered the views of Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 parents on sending their child to school. Thank you for sharing and we took your views into account when planning a partial re-opening for these particular year groups.

Following on from this I think it is a good idea to explain why and how we are opening. I hope it will help you further in your decision-making process. It is so important that you make an informed decision.

Background

The Government has said that they would like to see schools opening to a wider number of children by **no earlier** than June 1st, whilst maintain the existing provision for the children of key workers. This date is dependent on them being satisfied that the 5 key tests are met. They are keeping this under constant review and are expected to meet on Thursday 28th May. The year groups they have identified are Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

Within this context, the Government guidance also states clearly that the final decision about inviting children back rests directly with school leaders. The guidance also states specifically that, 'it may be necessary for providers to introduce a temporary cap on numbers to ensure that safety is prioritised'. Guidance the government has issued to schools can be accessed by following this link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>.

Sandwell Local Authority advise that the cap is of between 6 -10 children depending on the size of the classroom. Sandwell Local Authority have written a letter that accompanies this letter.

Unions are not in favour of schools opening to a wider number of children, irrespective of the outcome of the review, and some have recommended that schools do not engage with planning for a potential 1st June commencement. However, the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) has released some very useful advice and you can read this by following this link:

https://www.naht.org.uk/news-and-opinion/news/leadership-news/advice-for-school-leaders-on-phased-returns/?utm_campaign=1903074_New%20guidance%20for%20members&utm_medium=email&utm_source=National%20Association%20of%20Head%20Teachers&dm_i=3OT7,14SF6,1GEWIE,3ZU34,1

Our overriding ambition is to ensure that we can provide the safest environment possible for staff and children. The government is quite clear that if the 5 key tests have not been met, opening of schools for a wider number of children will not take place on June 1st.

For our school there are also many challenges and we have listed the most challenging aspects below to help you further in your decision making.

Challenges

1. One of our challenges is keeping class sizes small enough to maintain the best possible social distancing between the children and the staff, with a reduced number of staff available.

Our own assessments of our classroom space show we could accommodate no more than 10 in each teaching space. We feel that more children than that would compromise the safety of both the children and staff within it. On this basis, given a typical class size of 30, each class of children would require three teachers and three classrooms.

This will mean that the majority of the children will not be taught by their own class teacher or be taught in their normal classroom.

2. Another challenge is to keep movement to a minimum to reduce the risk of contagion.

In order to minimise the risk of contagion, we will be:

- i. staggering arrival and departure times

- ii. keeping the children in the same place for the majority of the day, and to use the same desk and room
- iii. allow the children only to mix with the other children that are in their teaching group
- iv. restrict the number of children using the toilets at any one time
- v. control movement around corridors
- vi. stagger the use of playgrounds
- vii. ensure that children wash their hands several times a day
- viii. all children need to bring their own lunch, our external catering is unavailable
- ix. all the teaching areas will be cleaned at lunchtime and a more thorough clean will happen at the end of the school day
- x. if your child needs to be accompanied on site then only one parent should attend
- xi. there will be a one-way system around the site, starting at the main entrance and ending at the KS1 playground gate. Social distancing rules will apply.
- xii. Parents need to be aware of recommendations on transport to and from schools. This guidance can be accessed by <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>
- xiii. No child or parent should enter the school site if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus.

What does this mean for parents and children?

Effectively this means that there could be insufficient capacity to resume a normal working week, even for a reduced number of children.

This means that, if we were to accommodate all of the year groups (Nursery to Year 6) in school at the same time, children would probably only be able to attend school for one or two days a week.

It means a great deal of protection is needed by parents, staff and children to make sure we can be as safe as we can. Although we will all do the very best we can to provide a safe environment for both the children and staff as we can, we cannot guarantee that it will be 'virus free'.

Summary

We are trying to be as open with you as we can. We are more than willing to try our best to make all of this work. There are a good many challenges we are working through and this is not risk free. We are very aware planning is different from implementation.

We will continue to provide home learning for all year groups.

Our top priority for the curriculum we will deliver at school is to make sure the children feel safe and happy.

For those parents that choose to keep their children at home we hope that that teachers will be able to phone and speak to yourselves and the children on how they are doing with their home learning.

It is important to note we will **not** be running Breakfast Club or any of the extra-curricular activities. This means that there has not been, nor will there be, provision before the start, or after the end of the day.

I hope that the information provided in this letter, combined with the links included above, will give you sufficient information.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this letter.

From the bottom of our hearts please look after yourselves and stay safe.

Yours sincerely

Miss Blackmore

Head Teacher