

Shepherds Down School

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Headteacher: Mrs Debby Gooderham



7th July 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

It feels like a long time since school was 'normal' but it has been good to see more children return over the last few weeks.

We are anticipating that we will be able to open to all children full time from 7th September. I am in the process of reviewing our current risk assessment and guidelines in light of the recently published guidance for September and will be able to share exactly how we will operate early next week. Many of our existing control measures such as frequent sanitising, grouping adults and children in bubbles and minimising contact for children and staff beyond those bubbles, will be in place, alongside the use of the test, track and trace system. However, there will be more children and adults if everyone is full time, so there are further practicalities to work out. I will be in contact before the end of term to share what this will be like and how we will be continuing to try to minimise the risk to everyone when we return.

Transport:

I believe there will also be new guidance for school transport but I expect that there will remain limit to their capacity, either in numbers of children on a bus or availability of escorts. I would therefore encourage any parents who in a position to, to transport their child and claim the mileage for the first few months. I will let you know when I have further information on transport for September.

September's Curriculum:

All the teachers are in the process of writing a curriculum, which will support all children's return to school. We are calling this the 'Recovery Curriculum' and it will priorities the following:

- Establishing a safe environment and re-building relationships
- Gaining an understanding of the new needs of all children
- Re-building children's confidence and readiness to learn in school.

Ultimately, we will be ensuring that we prioritise every child's mental health and address any particular needs they might be returning with e.g. increased anxiety, increased therapy needs. We also want to make sure that we acknowledge and value the circumstances of every child over the past few months, whether that has been in school or learning at home. To support this if you have any photos of what your child did at home during this period we will be pleased to receive them so that we can share and celebrate what each child did. I will share the completed curriculum on the website before September. This curriculum will be followed for at least the first two weeks or longer if needed, until each child is ready to focus on the learning identified in its individual learning plan.

Class lists:

We have completed the class lists and will be sending the photos of the children and adults in your child's class home with the school reports. Whilst I know many of you have expressed a preference for your child to stay in the same class in the coming year as it was not a complete year, this is not possible for every child, as we have to accommodate 25 new children as well. Unfortunately, as we are unable to mix the established bubbles and some children are at home, no children, including those attending school currently, will have the opportunity to visit their new class or meet any unfamiliar adults they will be with next year, before the



Summer. Instead, we are in the process of producing a video from each class team introducing themselves and the classroom and we will send you the details of this with the class lists by next week. In light of not being able to provide any physical transition, and to support children returning to school for the first time after lockdown we are happy to discuss a gradual return to school for your child in September if you feel that is what your child will need. Please contact your child's class teacher or myself to discuss this or any other concerns you might have over your child's class or them returning to school in September.

Questionnaires:

Thanks to all parents and carers who completed the parent questionnaire. The results were overwhelmingly positive and provided some helpful feedback to support the school development over the coming year. I will produce a summary of the results and share it before the end of term.

Reports:

The end of year reports will be sent home during the week beginning 13th July. This is an opportunity to celebrate all the achievements of each child up to when we had to close for education. As I have previously mentioned, there may well be some gaps in learning but there will also be lots to celebrate. If you want to discuss anything that is included for your child please contact the class teacher and they will be able to discuss it further with you.

Leavers' assembly:

We are holding a virtual leavers assembly for all year 6 children on Wednesday 22nd July at 10;30am. We will be sending out a Zoom invitation to all year 6 children and parents to join from home, those year 6 children in school that day can join from their classes. It is a shame that we cannot say goodbye to all the leavers in person, but please join us on Zoom if you have a year 6 child.

Dates:

Last day of term – Wednesday 22nd July

School re-opens to children – Monday 7th September