

15/05/2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Unfortunately, following the letter I sent out yesterday dated 14th May 2020, at 16.30 the Department for Education published further guidance to schools with their ambition for all primary aged children to return to school before the summer for a month if feasible.

All schools nationally have been planning a phased return for children. However, in the Government's late announcement yesterday, it states that '**schools should not plan on the basis of a rota system, either daily or weekly**'. After many hours of hard work and preparation to ensure the safe return of our Year 6 children, Head Teachers now have to go back to the drawing board and start all over again.

Please be assured that our priority is the safety of all children and staff. Today, I've been attending virtual meetings with Head Teachers in Dorset as well as the Head Teachers in the Ferndown Cluster. There was a consensus that if we are now to plan for **all** children to attend school on a full-time basis (Monday-Friday), along with the children of key workers and vulnerable children, following the Government's guidance around social distancing and handwashing measures, that more notice was needed. The reason for this is that schools need to: review preparations of the site (adding 2m markings indoors and outdoors); implement protective measures to reduce possible contact between different groups of children, and between adults, via the introduction of a one-way system in corridors; review staffing availability, considering those who are in the clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable groups; and consider staff ratios in relation to group sizes, creating additional teaching groups in Year 6, each with no more than 15 children.

As a result, all schools (First, Primary, Middle and Upper), in the Ferndown and Wimborne clusters will reopen to children in identified year groups (Early Years, Year 1 and Year 6), **from Monday 8th June 2020**. This has been shared with Dorset Council as it was agreed that schools now need to review their previous risk assessment plans to facilitate the safe return of children and staff. In the meantime, with the exception of half term when school will be closed, children will still be able to virtually attend their 'live' lessons with teachers daily. We will also endeavour to ensure that our virtual education provision continues for children in all year groups throughout this period, with 'live' lessons daily as I am committed to ensuring that children's learning with their teachers continues.

I have no doubt that the Government will issue more guidance on this in the days ahead but please be assured that we are doing all that we can. The first phase of the wider opening of schools is highly complex but we will work together to ensure the safety of our children and staff comes first. We recognise that social distancing in schools cannot be guaranteed but please know that we will do all we can to implement social distancing measures to the very best of our abilities, drawing on other schools' experiences internationally. Please be reassured that we will be respectful of the decisions you take in relation to your children's return to school, and will support you fully in whatever you decide.

In these uncertain times, I would like to say thank you for your support and understanding. I would also like to say thank you to parents/ carers who have taken the time to write to me- these messages of support have been shared with staff and have meant so much to all of us as we strive to do our best for everyone in our school family. Working together is key so if you have any ideas, suggestions or concerns please phone me on 01202 872474, or email me directly at DCraddock@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk.

We are really missing your children and the photographs that they sent in today on our 'Uniform for Uniform' Fundraiser have been an absolute joy to see. Thank you so much for supporting our children to get involved.

We hope that you and your loved ones are safe and well.

Yours sincerely,

