

14.05.2020

Dear Parents & Carers,

As you are aware last Sunday the Prime Minister announced the Government's roadmap for how and when the UK will adjust its response to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) crisis, including the phased return of some children to schools from 1st June 2020 at the earliest.

Over the last few weeks, schools within our Trust have been open for vulnerable children and those of Key Workers. As from 1st June 2020, we have been asked to welcome back children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, alongside those who are already attending the schools. In addition, secondary schools have been asked to consider how they will offer some face to face support to supplement the remote education of Year 10 and Year 12 students who are due to take key exams next year.

We are receiving updates from the DfE on a daily basis, and there is in my opinion, a chance that things may change further as the DfE consults with Teaching Unions, the support staff Unions, the Local Authorities and other organisations connected with the education sector. If this is the case and timelines were to change then we would obviously keep you informed, but at the time of writing we are giving due consideration to the logistical requirements needed to be able to widen our provision from the 1st June, 2020.

We are keen to get all of our students back when it is safe and appropriate to do so and as soon as the scientific advice allows. We are mindful that it is in the children's best interests, from an academic, health and mental well-being perspective to return. However, during these early stages of opening the doors to more children it is important that we recognise that they will not be returning to the same provision that they experienced prior to the outbreak of the pandemic.

We will be following all the latest government guidance around social distancing, personal hygiene, break times, assembly gatherings, movement in corridors and catering to ensure that our premises and our structures provide the safest environment possible for our children to return to. This will mean that the curriculum, pupil groupings, working practice and movement around the school, together with restrictions on the number of children who will be able to meet together during the school day will differ considerably from that they were familiar with prior to the lock down.

Obviously it is for parents to ultimately decide on whether they wish their children to return to school, but it is the Government's desire for children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to return to school after half term. We therefore need to survey our parents and seek information as to whether parents want their child to return from the 1st June, 2020. Once we know the potential numbers of children involved, we will be able to determine the staffing levels required and whether or not schools are in a position to be able to accommodate the requested numbers. In order to maintain the 2-metre social distancing many of our classrooms will only be able to accommodate between 3-6 children, therefore increasing the number of staff that the school would need on a day-to-day basis. With this in mind, we cannot categorically guarantee that all children will be able to take up provision on a full time basis and it may be that some form of rota system will have to be implemented initially.

Please could I therefore ask parents of children in the identified year groups to read the letter from your child's school outlining the logistics of provision and inform the Administrator via email whether your child requires a place as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Daryll Chapman
CEO Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust