



Dear Parents and Carers

### **Possible reopening of Kingston and Richmond Schools on 1 June 2020**

As we all know, the government announced a plan just over a week ago to reopen primary schools for children in some year groups from 1 June 2020. Whether this happens will depend on the country's response to the Covid-19 virus continuing to move forward in line with the five tests for adjusting the lockdown.

To date, our local schools have supported children's learning at home and we have received many expressions of thanks for the extra mile and care that has been shown by headteachers and school staff. Keeping in touch has been a focus for everyone and has helped to make sure children continue to feel part of a wider community. This has included careful risk assessments for children with Education, Health and Care Plans and adapting resources or provision, so that children with special educational needs and disabilities can continue to make good progress. School leaders have also worked effectively with social workers to ensure that children and families who need the consistency of school have been able to attend regularly. Kingston and Richmond are first and second in London for the number of vulnerable children that attend school each week, which is a real testament to the inclusive nature of our local schools.

Schools have been asked to plan that children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 are the first groups who are prioritised to return from 1 June. This is in addition to the continued offer for the children of our critical workers and those who are more vulnerable, including some children and young people who have Education, Health and Care Plans, so a big step for some schools to accommodate. Since the announcement, we have been working with our school leaders to assess and plan how they might be able to do this in a graduated, structured way, which makes sure that the school environment is safe for children and school staff, and allows for social distancing as much as this is possible with young children. We are sure that you will appreciate that this is a considerable undertaking and involves a number of challenges for schools and those of us who support them. We have to recognise that schools will not be able to replicate what education looked like before the lockdown, but will do their best to develop an environment and provision that is as close to normal as it can be. Schools know that reintegration for every child and supporting transition, particularly for those children who are moving onto secondary school, must be their priority in the first few weeks.

For children in other year groups, remote learning will continue. This will be supported by your child's school, alongside the national education resources that you are able to access.

Some children and many staff have been in our schools since the general closing in late March, and they have been practising social distancing and stringent hygiene processes throughout. Our sincere thanks to all those who have been involved in supporting children. We know that we can build on how they have managed during the lockdown as we gradually increase access for more children over the next few weeks.

We have the utmost confidence in our school's ability to develop supportive and informed plans for reopening, which can give families the confidence and reassurance that their children can return to school safely over the coming weeks. School leaders take their responsibility to protect and care for children very seriously, and they place children's and staff wellbeing and safety at the heart of their decision making. This task cannot be underestimated. The model for reopening schools is likely to look different in each school because it will reflect the staff they have available who are fit to work, the nature of the school building and its wider site, the number of year groups they need to accommodate, and will be informed by a detailed risk assessment. Headteachers are working with their staff teams to plan the details of this phased reopening and our advice has been to use a graduated approach across the first few weeks of June. It is likely that children in the key year groups may access a part time model initially and individual schools will be liaising with you to share this, alongside communication of how it might develop as things settle and new systems embed. We anticipate that the offer will increase in time. We are sure all families will understand that each school will need to make reopening work for their own situation and therefore things cannot be the same in every school.

Your child's school will be in contact with you to talk about next steps, outline their plans and help to answer the ongoing questions you may have. Planning the next phase will need to be a dynamic process as it is dependent on the government's tests for easing the lockdown and the associated government guidance. We understand this may be a worrying time for you as a parent or carer, but we appreciate your ongoing support and understanding.

Please contact your child's school directly if you have any questions.

Many thanks,

Yours sincerely



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