



Dereham Church of England Junior Academy

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Diocese of Norwich
Education and
Academies Trust

13th May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers of children in Year 6,

I want to start by thanking you for all your support during this challenging time. We are writing to update you as much as we can about our current plans to support the wider opening of schools over the next half term.

As you will know, although the Government have talked about children gradually returning to school, **this can only happen when it is safe to do so**. The 5 key criteria set by the government have to be met alongside a satisfactory school risk assessment. As such, this letter forms part of our 'Risk Assessment' with regard to **Year 6 children only**. Our provision for children of key workers and vulnerable pupils will continue during this time.

When risk assessments are complete and we are able to safely open to Year 6 children (we have **NO set date** for this as yet, despite government guidelines), we will not be welcoming all Year 6 children back in one go. This will simply not be safe for children or staff.

If we have enough staff, and all other areas of the risk assessment are satisfied, our re-introduction of Y6 children will be phased in by initially splitting the year group into two groups. Each group (Group A and Group B) will consist of 2 classes of Year 6 children. These two classes will then be further split into 4 smaller **teaching groups**. This means, as per Government guidance, each teaching group will be 15 or fewer.

Guidance is very clear that the teaching groups and the staff that work with them, need to be **consistent**. This means there will be no mixing between the groups or changing of staff unless there is illness to cover. Each group (Group A and Group B) will operate on a week on/week off basis; they will be in school for a week and then off for the following week.

Knowing how many pupils will be in school from Year 6, is crucial to determining if this plan is viable. Therefore, we have written a survey (link at the bottom of the letter) for you to complete to find out if **you intend to send your child back to school** when we are able to open to our Year 6 children. We know that some of you will have many worries and concerns about this and I fully respect that you will make your own decision as to whether returning to school is right for your child. To this end, periods of absence, attendance panels and fines will not be issued or considered during this time.

If you have a child with underlying health conditions, it is likely that they should still remain at home. You know your children and we will whole-heartedly support the decisions you make concerning this. There will be absolutely no pressure to send your child to school, unless they have been identified as a vulnerable pupil in which case they are already likely to be attending with us.

We know that many children will be keen to get back to school, perhaps remembering how this was before. However, the reality of how we will have to work now will be very different. It is very likely that our Year 6s won't be taught by their class teacher; they will have to remain at their desks when in class and they will not be able to mix with others outside of their small teaching group. In addition to this, they will have to maintain social distancing within their small teaching group. To help maintain this and in order to satisfy guidance, we will have staggered



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breaks and lunches as well as possibly having to stagger start and end of day times in order to ensure there are not gatherings of pupils and parents at the school gate.

Please be aware, these are our current plans and may be subject to change once we have completed our full risk assessment. Knowing how many pupils intend to return is crucial to ensuring we can complete our risk assessment, so please respond to our survey. <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/6B3HJ3D>

As a working mum myself, I know this isn't ideal and for some of you it won't be what you were hoping for. I know it could affect your ability to return to work and will, undoubtedly cause you some additional stress and worry. However, the safety of our entire school community has to be at the forefront of decisions made and I am not prepared to put staff and children at risk unnecessarily.

We are currently liaising with our two feeder high schools to agree some transition work, whether that be in person or virtually. Our fabulous Year 6 team will keep you posted on this and will share any news when they have it.

Many thanks for your continued support

Mrs Kelly Scott
Headteacher