

Wednesday 3rd June 2020

Dear Parent/Carers,

**COVID 19 Reopening of Blackfell Primary School**

Following on from our correspondence last week from Angela Star, chair of governors, about any potential reopening of school from the 8th June at the earliest, our governing body met this week to review our current position and make a decision about any potential reopening of our school.

**Blackfell Primary School Governing body have made the decision, with all of the guidance and information available, that school will reopen to pupils in Year 6 only from 15th June 2020.**

All schools, including Blackfell Primary School, continue to be open to vulnerable children and to those children of critical workers i.e. parent/carers whose work is critical to the Covid 19 response. The criteria for this provision is in the government document ‘Critical workers who can access schools or educational settings’. This was updated on 1st June 2020 and is available on the gov.uk website.

As governors, we all have a duty of care and responsibility to ensure the safety of our children, staff and wider community in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. As you are aware, the revised government guidance has changed and been updated very regularly since the lockdown started. Every school is very unique and any potential safe reopening has many things to consider including comprehensive risk assessments approved by both school governors and Sunderland Local Authority.

The government asked governors to consider Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children to attend school from 1st June, where safe to do so. At our meeting, governors collectively reviewed risk assessments completed for any potential reopening to any pupil and with specific year groups considered. We considered accessibility on and off the school site; available areas of school to be used, including the layout of the school building and site; staff availability to attend work, following clear government guidance and our responsibility to fully implement guidance to ensure safety of all staff, children and the wider community at this point in time. The government have shared that the 15th June 2020 is a key date where they believe the transmission rate of the virus will reduce; alongside information available for our local area, this key date was also a point that we collectively took into consideration.

We understand that this decision may be very disappointing for many of our children and families but it is important that our school is safe when we open. Please be assured that with the information available to us, this decision has been made in the best interests and safety of the children, staff and the wider community of our school.

I will be writing to all parent/carers later this week to share the offer we have for Year 6 children to return to school from Monday 15th June 2020. Parent/carers of Year 6 children will then be able to make an informed decision if they wish for their child to return on this date.

We will be reviewing our school’s opening at regular intervals and will update everyone if plans are refined and adapted following government guidance and risk assessment reviews. It may be that we can open to more pupils later this term if it is safe to do so.

It is very important that our school is safe when we open to any pupil or year group and hope you understand our reasons for making this decision. As soon as we can, following the guidance, we look forward to welcoming as many of our children as possible back to Blackfell.

Parents, children and families have been very supportive over the last few months and we would like to thank you for this.

Please contact the school office if you have any questions or queries.

E-mail: blackfell.primary@schools.sunderland.gov.uk

Telephone: 0191 9171665

Everyone at Blackfell Primary School sends you our very best wishes.

Julia Watkins

Headteacher