

Communities Directorate

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Dear parents & carers,

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Update – Phased Reopening of Schools

Thank you for your contribution to the pandemic response. I know that being at home with your children and supporting their learning, alongside your own work and wellbeing can be both a significant challenge and responsibility. Your efforts have made a real difference in reducing the spread of the virus.

School staff have also worked so positively in recent months in remaining open for vulnerable children and those of keyworkers, including during school holidays. They have developed new approaches to supporting learning at home and have made sure that the many families have been able to access food and other support.

We all know that regular attendance at school is important to children's wellbeing and learning. We are committed to having due regard to the guidance that has been issued by the government. A phased reopening of primary schools from 1st June at the earliest is envisaged to involve children in nurseries, reception, year one and year six. Secondary Schools and Alternative Providers are considering their approach to offering some face to face time for pupils and we are working with Special Schools on their plans to gradually increase the number of children and young people on site.

We are working with schools to support their plans for a gradual and phased reopening. Their plans will be guided by a thorough Health and Safety Risk Assessment taking into account their physical capacity on the school site, staffing levels and other safety measures. We are supporting school leaders with this and are aware that some schools may need additional time to put safety measures in place. This is all part of the government's conditional plan which it says will remain under regular review and will only happen if the level of infections continues to reduce and the government's other conditions are met.

We know that you will understand that the safety of everyone in the school community is paramount. We all want to get more pupils back into school as soon as it is safe to do so. Whilst all schools are working hard to respond to the guidance provided by the Department for Education

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some schools may not be able to offer immediate full time provision for the relevant year groups. New arrangements may not be introduced immediately or fully on 1st June. Schools will be writing to parents to outline their plans, which will be based on the health and safety risk assessment that they have been asked to complete.

The guidance makes it clear that it is not compulsory for parents to send their children to school at this time and there will be no penalties if you choose to keep your children at home. Schools will continue to provide a home learning offer to pupils not going into school. They will also keep in regular contact with families.

The Department for Education has published information for parents and carers around extending opening of schools, providing information on key areas of concern. Further information can be found in the attached government guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

Parents and carers can contact us if you have any concerns or queries on the parental helpline on 01926 412021 from 0900 to 1700 or check the Council's website for further information. The parent and carer webpage can be found here:

<https://schools.warwickshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus-advice-parents/1>

We know that headteachers will make thoughtful plans for the school communities that they know so well. I want to assure you that schools are working closely with the Local Authority and their professional associations. I would like to reassure you that the health, safety and wellbeing of children and staff remains the top priority for everyone involved at all times.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please do contact your school in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,



Ian Budd

Assistant Director of Education Services

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