Date: 20 May 2020
My ref: Covid-19 - mainstream

People & Communities
People and Communities
North Somerset Council
Town Hall
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Dear Parent/Carer

1 June Re-opening Plans

As schools in North Somerset continue to work on their risk assessments and site plans to enable some addition pupils to start to come back to school from 1 June 2020, I wanted to write to you to firstly say how proud I am of the responses made by your school to the recent outbreak. They have gone beyond the call of duty to ensure your children continue to receive a quality education whether in school or not.

The decision as to whether or not you send your child to school is a personal one. Schools are doing all they can to keep everyone safe. They are working through the latest government guidance to ensure that social distancing can be implemented as much as possible in a primary school setting, and to ensure that smaller groups of children in classes of up to 15 pupils plus staff can be kept in a single group to avoid cross-contamination with other classes.

As schools plan for the changes needed, some may be able to open on the 1 June whilst others may take some extra time to train staff or put practical changes in place to meet the new guidelines. Whilst we appreciate many of you want to get back to work and childcare may be an issue for you, schools will only delay their partial extra re-opening or, in some cases, advise you that they are unable to cater for your class or year group because they cannot meet the requirements either by the 1 June or because the buildings or availability of sufficient staff prevents this. Your school has my full support in the decisions they are making.

I would ask that you work with your school to ensure that the arrangements they are putting in place in record time can be carried out as they have planned them. They will be arranging for smaller class groups based on the needs of your children. If your child is not in your preferred group, please do not complain. The priority is for your child to receive the education they need as safely as possible. If your child has a the same or a different teacher, please accept the courage of this member of staff to agree to come into work in these delicate times. Schools will be very different to the settings we knew before the outbreak, but I know everyone will be doing their very best to make the children feel happy and secure in their new environments.

As a reminder, if schools are able to increase their capacity to extra pupils, their priorities will be (in order):

1. To continue to be available to the children of key workers;
2. To continue to be available to vulnerable pupils
3. To offer up to 15 places per classroom across Reception and Year 1 cohorts
4. To offer up to 15 places per classroom to Year 6 pupils

The numbers of classrooms to be used will be dependent on the numbers of staff able to work in school and the physical spaces available. You may also find that your school may not be able to follow the recommended priorities, again due to the availability of physical space and staff resources. You child may not return to the class room they were in up to 20 March 2020.

Please can I also remind you that if you child is to attend school, that they are accompanied by one parent only and that you adhere to social distancing rules. If you cannot walk, cycle or scoot to school, please travel by car. Please adhere to any drop-off and pick-up arrangements your school may publish. This may include different drop-off and pick up times. To ensure that Council-operated home to school transport can be available to those who cannot get to school by other means, we would ask that only those who are entitled to free home to school transport who are unable to get their child to school using other means make use of this service at this time.

Please continue to work with your school and within the published requirements during this difficult time for us all.

With best wishes

Sheila Smith
Director of People & Communities

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