

To:  
All Primary School Headteachers

Our Ref: CON/SH

Date: 15/05/2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I am sure you know that the Prime Minister's intention is to get our children back to school, beginning on 1<sup>st</sup> June. If the conditions are right, children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 are expected to begin school again. Three weeks later the plan is that all other year groups would return to school.

Social distancing is so important that it has stopped us from meeting loved ones outside our households, shopping, and socialising. In simple terms, keeping apart stops coronavirus from spreading.

Government guidance acknowledges that it would be impossible to keep social distancing in school, especially for the youngest children.

While very few children have been badly affected by the virus, we still do not know how much they pass it on to each other, to school staff and to family members, even when they show no symptoms.

Schools across the country are beginning to plan for the return of increasing numbers of children, but most headteachers are doing this with a heavy heart. They are worried that the conditions for safe return are not yet in place.

I have asked schools to survey parents to gain a greater understanding of those of you that would want to send their children back at this time.

I want to be clear that there is no guarantee of a place currently even if you wish your children to return to school. There may not be enough classrooms to accommodate demand, or enough healthy or non-shielding staff available despite the very best efforts of the school leader.

Each school building is unique and there are limits to the number of children who can be accommodated according to government guidelines. It may be that the maximum number of children in a classroom is as low as seven or eight. If there are only 7 teaching spaces this limits the maximum number of children in school to 56 at any one time.

If your child returns to school, they may not have the same teacher, be taught alongside their friends, or with the support from other staff that they may be used to.

The school day will look very different and there will be a limited range of activities they can do. Younger children will have a narrow range of resources and equipment to play with. No soft furnishings or soft, and difficult to clean, resources are allowed.

We all want our normal lives back. We all want to see happy, safe children in school. Schools will do all they can to keep your child safe, but they cannot guarantee that they will be as safe at school as they would be at home. The government have made it clear that there will be no penalties for parents who choose not to send their children to school at the present time.

I know your child's school will be in touch with more details about how they intend to implement government guidelines. I can reassure you that they have planned alongside the local authority to make their school as safe as they can for your children.

Yours sincerely



Caroline O'Neill  
Strategic Director  
Children, Adults and Families



Councillor Gary Haley  
Cabinet Member  
Children and Young People