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Dear Parents and Carers

I want to explain how school is going to work for up to the end of this academic year. This letter will be relevant to parents and carers of all pupils whether they are physically in school or being educated remotely.

As you are now aware, Northfield Manor will start a 'slow, steady and safe' phased reopening from the week beginning 15th June. This phased reopening is for the identified groups of Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils. If you have children in these year groups, you have already completed a survey and requested a place in a 'bubble' should you wish your child to attend.

The government's priority order for pupils is as follows:

- Key workers and vulnerable children
- Reception children
- Year 1 children
- Year 6 children

Our 'bubble' limits are set at 10. We have 14 classrooms. As you can see, we are limited to 140 pupils. Once these places are used up, there is no more capacity. The government's chosen system for opening schools does not allow for a rotation system to enable all pupils to have time in school before the end of school year. This is unlike in Wales and other countries. Rotation models were recommended to the government by SAGE; however, the government did not choose to follow these recommendations. There was an original intention from the government to get all year groups back before the summer, however, this is still to be reviewed. They will need to change their approach if this is to be logistically possible. We are now in a position where we have one third of pupils permanently learning in school and two-thirds permanently learning from home. Not a situation I would have chosen.

As our school has a large number of key workers, demand for places is high and growing. We already have 5 key worker bubbles in operation and estimate that several more will be needed – remember key workers and vulnerable children have to be

given first priority. We require 6 more bubbles to meet current demand for priority places in Reception, Y1 and Y6. This leaves little or no capacity for other year groups to attend and it is unlikely, unless the government change the rules, that this will be possible.

Staffing

Staffing capacity is also a limiting factor. Factors affecting this are the same as they are for all workplaces and related to staff health vulnerabilities and childcare issues for children under school age – though the latter issue is now starting to ease. Where possible, pupils in school in priority groups (Reception, Y1 and Y6) will be educated by their own teacher. This is not always possible. Key worker groups will also have permanent staff from the time of phased reopening. As these are mixed year groups, it is unlikely they will have their own teacher. Teachers will do their best to manage the needs of the groups in school alongside the needs of those learning from home – most teachers will now have both these groups to support. 2 members of staff are needed per bubble to ensure safeguarding. Our staffing is sufficient to meet the needs of our current bubbles and maintain home learning. However, we are reaching our limitations.

Remote learning

It is worth us remembering that at least two thirds of the school will continue to learn at home so as the school carries out the phased reopening, it still has to provide purposeful learning that tries to meet the needs of the children. Class teachers will continue to set work packs for pupils and try to maintain continuity and support through dojo messaging. We will continue to review and adapt how we do this while being mindful of staff well-being.

Transition for Pupils

Transition will need to take place remotely. We are currently working on the induction of our new Reception cohort and the transition for Year 6-7. In all other year groups, your child will ‘meet’ and get to know their new teacher through letters and videos. Classes will not be mixed this year, in order to try to maintain some continuity. You will have more information on this in the coming weeks.

It is worth bearing in mind that we do not know what a return in September will look like and whether we will be in a position to open to all pupils in the normal way. I sincerely hope so, but it is not certain.

End of Year Reports

Your pupil’s end of year school report will be available w/b June 22nd. It will be possible to collect your report alongside your child’s work pack. If your child does not need a work pack, your report will be emailed to you.

Phased re-opening Risk Assessments

Our phased re-opening Covid-19 risk assessment is being updated in light of the latest changes to government guidance provided in the last few days. It will be available for parents to read from Monday.

Residential Trips

If your child was due to attend a residential this year, you will have received a letter explaining how to gain a refund through ParentPay. If you missed this, please contact the office.

Priority Groups (Reception, Year 1 and Year 6) Next Steps

If you have chosen for your child to attend phased reopening you will shortly receive a letter setting out the routines for the school day. Your children will also receive a video from their teachers explaining the school day and showing them how they will use their classrooms and outside space.

Key worker/Vulnerable Children Groups

Your child will continue to attend as normal. Due to the increase in numbers, I will now need to stagger your drop-off and pick-up times, to avoid a 'pinch-point' on entry. This will be a minimal change and should not affect the time you have to get to or leave work. You will receive a letter explaining this tomorrow as well as information regarding the fixed staffing.

Breakfast and After-school Club

We do not have capacity to provide this service at this time.

Yours faithfully

Sandra Pennington

Headteacher

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