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**Headteacher: Mrs M McCarthy**



20<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have received further guidance from the Local Authority regarding the re-opening of schools. Following a review of current government and public health guidance, Wigan schools are advised to open no earlier than 8<sup>th</sup> June.

Beech Hill will follow this guidance and implement a phased return for pupils to ensure the safety of staff, pupils and our families. We will begin this return with our Reception children and only when we are satisfied that these children are safe and secure with the new arrangements, we will invite children from other year groups into school. Again, this will be done in phases and dates are not yet fixed. The situation will be under constant review and the school will respond to any new information and guidance with the health and safety of our community in mind. In line with government guidance, we will not expect children living with adults identified as clinically extremely vulnerable to return to school at this time.

The emergency Key Worker provision will continue to operate as it has since the closure, however, when your child's year group opens they will cease to attend and return to their own year group. As children return, they will access a full timetable – government guidance advises against part time places.

We are planning carefully to minimise the risk of transmission of Coronavirus on our site but I cannot promise a Covid-free zone nor can I promise a 2 metre distancing for all children and their teachers. We have adapted school policy and practices to provide as 'covid-secure' an environment as we are able.

It is very clear to us that on return to school, the day will be very different for very many reasons. Not all of our staff will be available to be in school because of personal circumstances and so children may be in the care of staff they are not used to being with. In addition, social distancing requirements dictate how we use our school building, how we organise school lunches, organise play times for children, ensure that children have access to toilet facilities and extra precautions around handwashing, opening our school office, dropping children off and picking them up.

Children will be taught in groups of no more than 15. They will stay as a group with their adults until the end of the school year. This will be their 'bubble'. There will be



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no hot meals cooked on site so packed lunches will be delivered to classrooms to be eaten either within the room or outside if the weather permits. Break times will be taken with the 'bubble' and there will be no joint play opportunities with other groups. Regular hand-washing and sanitising will take place throughout the day and children will be taught about hand and respiratory hygiene.

There will be one-way systems established on site and we will be using all entrances to school to avoid any congestion – you will be informed of these as the return to school for your child draws nearer. There will be clear indications of the 2m social distancing measures on paths and we expect all adults to observe these. The school office will only be available via telephone – we all know how quickly it can become congested. Any questions or concerns can be dealt with by telephone. If it is essential that you come into the building, please telephone beforehand to request an appointment.

I also ask that you start to discuss with your children that the return to school will not be school 'as we know it' but reassure them that all will be done to keep them safe, well and happy. Please also be assured that we will give you all of the relevant information in as timely a manner as we are able to facilitate you getting your children ready to come back.

This is normally one of the busiest terms for our school and we all feel enormous sadness that there will be no sports days, assemblies, leavers' productions, summer fair etc... but please be assured that when your children return to school, we are absolutely determined to make them feel as safe, secure and happy as we possibly can. If there are any changes in circumstances which you wish to inform us of please do let us know before the children arrive back in school – we are aware that some of them may need additional support.

I understand how frustrating this is – as a teacher, there is nothing as strange as an empty school – but we are doing all we can to ensure children return in the safest way. Thank you for your patience and keep following the government advice so that we can return to normal soon.

Yours faithfully,



Michelle McCarthy