



# Highfields Academy

*Together we inspire, always aiming higher*

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Good morning everyone,

I hope you are all well. As predicted, we are receiving lots of communication from various sources following the announcement that was made on Sunday. Yesterday was a very productive day. I 'attended' the NAHT conference, along with almost 300 other heads and this was very useful. We had our LAB (governor) meeting last night and again, some very useful discussions took place about how we will be able to start reopening the school on the 1<sup>st</sup> June (depending on what the scientific data and numbers are looking like). Today I will be virtually attending a meeting with all other local heads to discuss transition arrangements for Y6 pupils. One thing that has come out of this situation - my IT skills have improved dramatically and I'm becoming very adept at video conferencing!

On Monday evening the DfE released a document "Actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020. This is a public document and is available to all of you. Clearly it is essential reading for us but you may wish to have a look yourselves. The link is: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>.

I have copied and pasted some of the key points (not all) here:

- From the week commencing 1 June 2020 at the earliest, we will be asking primary schools to welcome back children in Nursery, Reception, year 1 and year 6, alongside priority groups.
- Our ambition is to bring all primary year groups back to school before the summer holidays, for a month if feasible, though this will be kept under review.
- Children and young people in eligible year groups are strongly encouraged to attend (where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household), so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending
- Every setting should carry out a risk assessment before opening. The assessment should directly address risks associated with coronavirus (COVID-19), so that sensible measures can be put in place to control those risks for children and staff. All employers have a duty to consult employees on health and safety, and they are best placed to understand the risks in individual settings.
- In mainstream schools and college settings the basic principle is that classes should be halved. Normally one teacher should be allocated to a group but if there are any teacher shortages then support staff may be used to lead groups, under the direction of a teacher.
- No one with symptoms should attend a setting for any reason. Eligible children – including priority groups - are strongly encouraged to attend their education setting, unless they are self-isolating or they are clinically vulnerable (in which case they should follow medical advice).

- Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time, and schools and colleges will not be held to account for attendance levels.

We are taking a very positive view of all of this and do believe that we will be able to meet the very large majority of what the government are requiring by the 1<sup>st</sup> of June. However, to repeat yesterday's message, the ultimate responsibility fall to me and the Trust and we will not feel pressured to do anything that we consider not to be safe.

We are currently working on plans and risk assessments of how to do this but we would like your support on this. Over the next week or so we are likely to be asking several questions but to start with there are just two today. I would appreciate your views on the two points below:

1. We will strongly encourage those eligible to attend from the 1<sup>st</sup> of June. However, we will not request fixed penalty notices for those who do not attend. At the end of the day it will be your choice as to whether your children attend as we have no powers to enforce this.

**How do you feel about this? Are you likely to be sending your children back to school on the 1<sup>st</sup> June?**

2. We are currently considering all sorts of safety measures and have lots of ideas of things that can be put in place to protect staff and children.

**We would welcome any ideas that you may have, particularly from parents who work in the medical industry or NHS,**

It is vital that we all work together on this and your views will be taken note of. We have a Trust Board meeting next Wednesday and this will be key to finalising our risk assessments. Your views on shaping this are important to us. Please email me directly at [head@highfieldsnantwich.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:head@highfieldsnantwich.cheshire.sch.uk) and make the subject of your email **COVID-19 RESPONSE**.

Once again, I would like to thank you all for your amazing support during these times.

Simon Dyson  
Principal