



BAMBURGH SCHOOL

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Dear Parents/Carers

You will be aware of the Prime Minister's latest announcements with regard to the gradual reopening of schools from 1st June 2020. Although Sunday's statement prioritised Reception, yr1 and yr6 children, the most recent information for special schools does not specify that any specific age or year groups should be the first to return to school.

I must stress that at the moment, for our school, there will be no immediate change. We will continue to offer what is currently in place and we will await further guidance from the government highlighting plans/proposals on how we can implement an increase in numbers in a way that is safe for all of our children and staff. We must take heed of the government's current message that we 'should stay at home as much as possible'. This is especially true for those with any underlying health or medical conditions/issues.

As social distancing is a priority, I must carefully consider how to safely and effectively teach your children, whilst giving them the support they need. Essential planning must be undertaken regarding the organisation of classrooms, class sizes, movement around corridors and how we enter and exit school - including how we travel to school on transport. We also have to consider whether staff are available in sufficient numbers - both to allow all of the above to happen in accordance with guidelines, and to meet our pupils' special needs. I want to reassure you all that our main priority is to keep all children and staff safe.

I must also consider the mental health and well-being of all children and staff as we impose necessary restrictions which will be very confusing for the children. Our pupils can be very tactile and hands-on, and they will find it difficult to adhere to the two metre rule which we must enforce. In addition the routines for washing hands and cleaning the environment and the tools we work with (e.g pens, pencils etc) will have to become part of our daily routines.

Breaktimes and lunchtimes, for the foreseeable future, will be very different. There will be no close contact games or large groups outside at any one time. Children will probably be able to play only with those in their small teaching group, while maintaining social distancing guidelines. They will not be able to have lunch as a whole primary group. We must prepare our children for these significant changes to their day in school, as many of our pupils rely heavily on structure and routine. Although there will be considerable changes ahead, staff will be here to help and support in the best and



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safest way they can. Things are just going to be a bit different for a while.

I am currently making plans and assessing risks, while preparing the school environment to ensure that the right level of social distancing can be achieved, when we begin to welcome back more children. I must stress that I still have concerns over how we will be able to keep primary children two metres apart at all times. It is likely that I will need to consider staggering the start/end of the school day, lunchtimes and breaktimes. It is unlikely that children will attend school every day - at least initially - to ensure fair access as far as possible. The return to full-time education for most of our children will need to be on a very gradual basis.

I await further guidance from Government and the Local Authority, in the hope that this may give me a clearer understanding of what I may be able to offer from 1st June and moving forward. Proposals are being considered, but the one thing that I will not compromise on is the safety of our children, parents and staff.

I would like to thank all of our families for your continued patience and support. I will update you of developments over the coming weeks.

Stay safe

Mr Nord



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