



Castle School

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Principal: Mrs S Wild

15 May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Following on from the information in the Trust Lighthouse newsletter from Alan Hardie, our Chief Executive Officer for the Trust, I am writing to share a little more information about the Government's announcement for schools and what it currently means for children and young people attending Castle School.

The Government hopes that mainstream Primary schools can start to extend opening for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. The guidance for specialist provisions such as Castle School is to 'work towards a phased return of more children and young people without a focus on specific year groups' – no specific timeline has been given for this.

We are expecting further guidance but I wanted to reassure you that we will only extend the opening of the school **if it is safe to do so**. In considering whether school is a safe space for children, staff and parents, we will be considering a range of factors including the following;

- Whether your child is **shielding** or anyone else in the family is shielding – you should have had a letter from the health service if this is the case
- Whether your child has any other **underlying health conditions** that need to be taken into account
- How we can manage **social distancing** for children and staff within our environment.
- How many **staff** are available to work with pupils, ensuring that we can be confident that we can run the school safely
- How we can ensure that the **environment** and levels of hygiene can be maintained as increased numbers of pupils and staff access the building
- How children can **travel** to school safely while also ensuring social distancing as far as possible
- The **changes** that we will need to make **to routines and teaching styles** in order to keep everyone safe – school is likely to look and feel very different

We are risk assessing all of the above issues and more as we wait for further guidance, however, to help us with our planning, we would like an idea of which children you would like



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us to consider possibly returning to school before the summer, and what reassurances you need before that could happen.

You can let us know by;

- emailing us - admin.cs@castle.ncea.org.uk
- ringing us on 01670 844322

It would also be very helpful if you could include in your response, your reasons for keeping your child at home or why you would like them to return to school and what will help you with your decision.

From the beginning of next week, we will begin follow up phone calls if we have not already heard from you.

I do appreciate that many of you have said you feel your child is safer at home and the Government have said that parents will not be fined if they feel their child is safer being looked after at home at the current time.

Moving forward, I would anticipate that we will look to increase numbers of pupils very gradually and this is likely to be on a part-time basis in the first instance, but only if we feel it is safe to do so. I will keep you updated as plans develop. In the meantime, the school's current arrangements for the children of Key Workers and those who are particularly vulnerable will remain unchanged.

Thank you for your continued support at this very challenging time – stay in touch and stay safe.

Yours sincerely

Sara Wild

Sara Wild
Principal – Castle School