



Outer West Learning Trust

13th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Potential School Reopening

Following the government's announcement on Sunday, we are writing to update you with regards to the potential reopening of schools, as we all deal with the challenging circumstances of this pandemic and the impact that it is having on us all.

Our preference is of course for all of our schools to find a way of opening again to our pupils, but our first priority must be that this is safe and manageable so that you (and staff) can have confidence in our planning and approach. We are currently discussing ways forward and will be guided by further information from the Department of Education, Newcastle Local Authority and the Unions.

We understand that the current uncertainties may be causing some anxiety and that many of you may not wish for your child to return at this time. Some may be shielding, deemed as vulnerable or feel that their child is safer at home. In the following few months, parents will be best placed to make this decision and the government have advised that there will be no legal or monitoring processes for attendance. Your school will be sending out a short parent survey to capture your current thinking.

Moving forward, there are a number of vital factors to be taken into consideration. As an example, we must consider how much of our school buildings can be cleaned to the standards required and therefore how many areas and classrooms we can safely open. This in addition to other health and safety risk factors will limit the numbers of pupils we can have in school at any one time.

We will therefore be proceeding with caution. The ambition is to reopen from June however this must be a phased approach. Schools will be very different to what they were before the lockdown and children will need to be supported to understand this. We may have to offer part-time hours to smaller groups of children and staggered start and finishing times - we will do our best!

It is most likely that this will begin with our oldest pupils in Year 6 over a gradual period of time. We will then be able to discuss if and how we are able to invite our younger children back to school by regular review of the risk assessments. I urge the parents of Nursery, Reception and Year 1 children not to expect that they will be returning in June and not until it is safe to do so.

Home learning will carry on as usual for year groups and children asked to stay at home.

Please also note that from the 1st June our schools will still be open to our most vulnerable children and those of key workers. Current Local Authority guidelines states that it is unlikely that any other pupils will be returning to schools on this date.

We will continue to keep you updated as best we can on developments and information we receive as and when they happen. In the meantime we thank you for your continued support, patience and understanding.

Yours faithfully,

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**Throckley Primary
School**

Suzanne Richardson
Headteacher
**Milecastle Primary
School**

Louise Thompson
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