



Ackworth School

29th May 2020

Dear parents and guardians,

I hope that you have enjoyed the respite from online learning and have found time for yourselves and your families over half term. The government has announced that its five tests for the wider reopening of primary schools from the 1st June have been met. This will not mean access to education as usual for any school any time soon. It will be about a cautious, phased reopening for some pupils, with some staff, for some activities. It is my responsibility to make sure that our pupils' learning and wellbeing is supported, whilst also protecting the health and safety of my colleagues.

The School Committee met last night and supports the decision to reopen to a wider group of pupils and has agreed that our operational plan and risk assessment makes it safe to do so. The risk assessment is available [on our website](#) and will be updated as further guidance is published.

We will begin with a phased return of the Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils in Coram House from the 1st June and will work towards providing some face to face support for small groups of 4th Form and Lower Sixth pupils in accordance with government guidance from the 15th June. Online teaching will continue for all pupils who are not returning at this point and for our boarders who will not be able to return to school until September. It is important to note that online teaching is likely to be impacted as we adjust to the new arrangements.

Year 6 and Reception will return on the 1st June followed by Year 1 on the 2nd June and Nursery on the 3rd June. This will enable younger children who struggle to learn autonomously to receive much needed instruction from their teachers and the benefits of social interaction with their friends and for Year 6 to begin the process of transition to senior school. What gives us confidence is the loyalty and professionalism of all of our staff and access to additional space for teaching safely indoors as well as outdoors.

Pupils in 4th Form and the Lower Sixth do have wider social circles which is why we need much clearer guidance from the government on what level of physical return to school is envisaged. We know that it will most definitely not be full year groups and that we will probably not be allowed to run a normal timetable. Insurers will not insure schools for pupils in year groups for whom no government guidance has been published. We still await answers to questions, especially around secondary quotas and rotas.

It is anticipated that the government will collect and publish up-to-date estimates of the reproduction rate of the infection at a regional level on a weekly basis, and determine a trigger point for closing schools if the reproduction rate rises above an unacceptable level. I

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welcome the introduction of the test and trace service as well as the announcement that anyone with symptoms of coronavirus is now eligible to book a test and that essential workers (including people working in education and childcare) can apply for priority testing.

The complexity of online learning has made it difficult to manage our report cycle in the usual manner. A detailed report about academic progress will follow at the end of June, when we hope pupils will have returned giving us a clearer picture of how their learning has progressed.

I have suggested that a long weekend or two might be an effective way of getting pupils, parents and teachers through the remaining 6 weeks of term. I am suggesting Friday 12th June and Monday 29th June as possible opportunities to break up the second half of the term and I will send you a survey on Monday about this to assess support for this suggestion.

Departments have completed their centre grade assessments for pupils who were facing public examinations and they are now being checked by the Senior Management Team before being sent to the awarding bodies. This represents a considerable amount of work on the part of our teachers and I appreciate the detailed and careful approach they have followed.

Can I finish by thanking you for the support that you have given the school and your children? I can't promise to employ all of you as teachers in the near future but you have passed the first test.

With best wishes,

Anton Maree
Head