

Headteacher: Miss Caitlin Macrae

15th May 2020

Dear parents and carers

Re – Wider reopening of schools

I hope you and your families remain safe and well.

As you may be aware, this week has seen a great deal of discussion in the media, amongst those working in schools and those affected, including parents, carers and young people, about the wider reopening of schools. The government has continued to release guidance about this throughout the week, which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

In summary, the guidance tells us the following:

The government will decide whether the '5 key tests' for reopening schools have been met on **28th May**. If these 5 key tests have been met, schools will be asked to begin to reopen more widely from **1st June**.

Year 10 and Year 12 students

- When schools do reopen more widely, secondary schools are being asked to supplement **Year 10** and **Year 12** students' remote learning with 'some face to face support'. We are being asked to consider how best to use this additional time to support these students in preparation for starting their final year of study for GCSEs, A Levels and other qualifications from September.
- These students are not expected to return on a full time basis from 1st June.

Children of critical workers and those children with specific needs

- We will continue to offer a school place to children of critical workers, and to those children with specific needs. **However, please be aware that the guidance for these families has changed.** Since school closure on the 23rd March, parents and carers have kept children at home, wherever possible, with the school remaining open for only those very, very few students who **absolutely needed to attend**. The government guidance is now encouraging all of these eligible children to attend school. It is no longer necessary for parents and carers to keep them at home if they can.

Students who are extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding, clinically vulnerable or living in a household with extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding family members

- These students **will not be expected back in school** until government guidance changes

Year 7, 8, 9, 11 and 13 students

- These students **will not be expected back in school**, until the government guidance changes, based on the 'most up to date assessment of the risk posed by the virus' which indicates 'it is appropriate to have larger numbers of children within schools.'

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Our next steps at The Highfield School:

Staff are currently working on plans to support this change in guidance from the government. As I am sure you will appreciate, there is a great deal of work for us to do in school to ensure that our risk assessments and health and safety practices are absolutely robust and we have everything in place to minimize the risks of wider opening for students, staff and families. We are so looking forward to seeing more of our students in school again, but I am very clear that this cannot happen until we have robustly assessed the risk and appropriate systems are securely in place.

Alongside my usual weekly update to all parents and carers on Monday 18th May, I will also write again to those of you who have children in Year 10 and 12 and to those of you who are critical workers and have children with specific needs later on next week. In that communication I may be able to lay out our initial plans, although this will depend on whether there has been any further clarification and guidance from the government and local authority. I will also seek your views on whether you are intending to send your child back into school, once we have everything in place to safely reopen more widely, at some point next half term.

Thank you for your ongoing patience and support in these challenging and unprecedented times.

Wishing you all the best of health.

Kind regards

Caitlin Macrae

Headteacher