

Highfield Update Friday May 15th 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Before I talk to the children in my weekly Magic Celebration Assembly, I wanted to update you regarding all the planning we have been doing this week following the government announcement that Schools could plan to re-open for all children of **Critical workers, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children from June 1st "at the earliest"**.

First of all, I would like to reassure you that together with my team I am putting together some incredibly detailed plans and risk assessments. Health and safety is the most important thing I do as a Headteacher and although I can never guarantee all children and staff can be kept 100% safe from COVID 19, I can do my very best to have rigorous and well thought out systems and procedures in place. The governing body is aware of the plans I am putting in place and they will be seeing them next week as they stand. All the Highfield staff are receiving the plans this afternoon so that I can receive their feedback next week.

I am following all the government's DfE guidance documentation which is being released daily on the DfE website

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education However, new guidance is coming out in drips and drabs and old guidance is being amended all the time. This means I constantly have to rethink and change my plans as I respond to this changing and new guidance.

Critical Workers

Last night the government amended its guidance regarding all children of critical workers. You are now "**strongly encouraged**" to send your children back to school after the half term holidays rather than keeping them safe at home if you can. There only needs to be one key worker in the household for this to apply. With this in mind I am expecting the number of Critical Worker children returning to School after the half term holidays to grow quite a lot. I need to know how many Critical worker children will be coming back to school **full time (no flexibility or part time basis)** so that I can see what capacity we will have for the other year groups the government is prioritizing.

I do currently feel that Highfield will be able to open for **all** our critical worker children from June 2nd but need your response by next Wednesday 20th May to confirm this

This is the latest May 14th Guidance:

*Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined below. Many parents working in these sectors may be able to look after their child at home, **but attendance is strongly encouraged**. If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors listed below, then **your children will be prioritised** for education provision and **are strongly encouraged to attend**.*

Health and social care

This includes, but is not limited to, doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

Education and childcare

This includes:

- childcare
- support and teaching staff
- social workers
- specialist education professionals who must remain active during the COVID-19 response to deliver this approach

Key public services

This includes:

- those essential to the running of the justice system
- religious staff
- charities and workers delivering key frontline services
- those responsible for the management of the deceased
- journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting

Local and national government

This only includes:

- those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the COVID-19 response
- or delivering essential public services, such as the payment of benefits, including in government agencies and arms length bodies

Food and other necessary goods

This includes those involved in food:

- production
- processing
- distribution
- sale and delivery
- as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines)

Public safety and national security

This includes:

- police and support staff
- Ministry of Defence civilians
- contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the COVID-19 outbreak)
- fire and rescue service employees (including support staff)

- National Crime Agency staff
- those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas

Transport

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

Utilities, communication and financial services

This includes:

- staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure)
- the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage)
- information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the COVID-19 response
- key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services)
- postal services and delivery
- payments providers
- waste disposal sectors

I now urgently need to know from you whether you fall into any of these categories and whether you will be sending your child to school on 2nd June. Please e-mail the school office with your Critical role, name of child and class. admin@highfield.leeds.sch.uk

Until I know these numbers I cannot open school for any of the other groups prioritized by the government. The government has said that Reception children are the next priority followed by year 1 children and then the year 6 children.

Once I have **all** the Critical worker children back in school I can then see what capacity we have for other children.

Next week I intend to write detailed letters to you our explaining how school will operate when we start reopening. I will include photographs of how the rearranged classrooms will look, details of staggered start times and finish times, curriculum information, lunch information and much, much more. Parents will then be able to talk through these plans with their children as appropriate and help prepare them for a school which will look and feel quite different to the one the children left in March.

There will be no attendance penalty fines during this initial phased reopening period.

Depending on our numbers during the first week in June (1st – 5th) we will endeavor to offer more places for Reception, then Year 1 and finally Year 6. I hope you can see how it is impossible to give exact dates at the moment. Of course this is all subject to the COVID data and could change very quickly should the government instruct us to stop our preparations.

For all our other parents who do not fall into these categories you have not been forgotten. Our SEESAW on line learning platform will continue as we do have some staff that have to work from home. They may not be your child's class teacher but they will continue planning, uploading and checking the children's work. As you will understand, running 15 classrooms (maximum of 15 children in each) for three year groups plus our critical worker children will take up the vast proportion of my staff.

The government's proposal that schools may be able to open for all children by July, "if feasible", is actually impossible on a fulltime basis. I would need 31 classrooms for this to happen and a lot more teachers. Hopefully, heads will receive more guidance from the government about this in the near future.

Now over to the children... Good morning children... (Good morning Mrs. Colley)

I hope you are all well and keeping busy at home. We have some great things to celebrate this week in our Magic Celebration Assembly. Did you all enjoy the Highfield Wave? I watched it over and over again and it made me cry a little bit because I miss the teachers who can't come into work because they might get poorly if they catch Coronavirus. Mrs. Bowker was the editor. Isn't she clever? Her little boy Henry chose the song too – so well done Henry!

A massive well done to class 6FH and 4FW who also have made a class video. It was so lovely to see you all in your separate gardens but all coming together as a class.

Now let's get ready for the weekend by singing our Friday Magic Celebration Assembly song...

This week on Friday in our Magic Celebration Assembly we will be singing (drum roll.....)

"Every Brand New Day"

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=every+brand+new+day+song&view=detail&mid=7D822D1226133BF08FC07D822D1226133BF08FC0&FORM=VIRE>

Have a lovely weekend everyone and let's continue to feel proud of what we are all doing to keep our children happy and safe

Mrs. Colley

