

19th June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for all you are doing to ensure your children's learning continues during this strange time. Many of you have really engaged with the online learning or paper based provision from your school. We now have about 40% of children back in primary schools across the Trust, as well as year 10 and year 12 classes on a rota based return. It has been lovely to see them all. Schools are strange places without children! The children have enjoyed meeting their teachers and their friends once again and numbers of returners are growing as people gain greater confidence when they see the lengths our schools are going to in order to keep everyone as safe as possible.

I know we all are longing for things to go back to normal but recognise that this may yet take some time. So I wanted to give you some idea about what might come next. It is difficult to have any degree of accuracy because we do not know what Government advice will be, nor how the greater flexibilities in the community will affect the numbers of infections in our area. Please forgive us if this changes again!

Additional provision: In our primary schools, we are reviewing whether we have space and staffing to safely offer places to more children. In the next week, parents and carers with children in the target year groups (Nursery, Year R, Year 1 and Year 6) may be asked if they intend to take up their place if they haven't already done so. Then the heads will decide, if they have capacity, which year group to open the offer to next. This process is not straightforward. Some schools will not be able to offer anything more and some may be able to offer to one further year group. This will depend on rooming and available staff. Class sizes will remain restricted to 15 as maximum in line with Government guidance and optimising spacing of desks in the room. You will recall that the use of the bubble group is the key strategy in primary schools, not social distancing, although this will be adhered to wherever possible. The school will be in contact by Friday 26th June to update you.

Transition: Many of you with children in pre-school or in Year 6 will be wondering what the transition arrangements will look like. We are having ongoing discussion about this and further information will be shared in the next few weeks. Managing a safe visit to site is tricky with the finally balanced arrangements for health and safety at the moment. However, we will put together a transition programme even if this has to be a virtual online transition. If you will have a problem with the IT access needed for this, please speak to your school and we will do everything we can to support you.

For those with Year 11 children who are coming to Post 16 at Helston, bridging units of work are in place to get students ready for the new courses in September. Contact Dave Dudley if you need to know more (ddudley@helston.cornwall.sch.uk).

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Google Classroom: Across the Trust, we are rolling out a virtual learning environment called Google Classroom. Some schools have been using this facility for some time so you may already be familiar with it. We are hoping to provide some face to face contact using this platform so your children will be able to see their teacher and their class. We are finalising some safeguarding protocols around this and then it will be rolled out. It will be one strand of our online learning provision and will help to keep learning on track more effectively, especially if there are further localised outbreaks of Covid in the future.

Autumn: Currently we are working on at least 3 models of provision for the Autumn.

Model 1. Full return of all pupils - school more or less as usual

This will happen if Government guidance suggests it is safe to operate in this way. This is certainly the Government's current ambition.

However, if there are limits to numbers of children in a classroom, it will be difficult to implement this model for many schools. It could also be the case that for some schools it will be straightforward - if the school has a low number of pupils on its roll and a lot of classroom space. In all schools, there may be some changes to the curriculum - assemblies where everyone gathers together might not happen for example. We may still need staggered breaks, drop off and pick up times etc.

Model 2. A blended learning model with a mixture of in school and online/home learning

This will happen if we need to adhere to a maximum number of children per classroom. The specifics for each school will vary according to pupil numbers and available spaces. Children may have to attend on a rota basis and have some learning in school with their teacher and some work provided to complete at home online/paper copy. The schools will write to parents and carers before the summer holidays to explain what this option will look like for their school in case Model 2 is needed.

Model 3. An online/home learning model with key worker provision only in school/hub

This will happen only if there is a localised outbreak of Covid 19. The school will be closed but work will be provided online/paper packs as now.

We will not know which model will be needed until nearer the time. Before the summer holiday we will let you know which model we anticipate will be used, but this could still change over the summer holiday period, depending on Government and Public Health England advice. We will keep you updated via your school's usual communication method and put the latest information on the school website.



Summer Holiday Provision: the current ideas are that there will be a holiday activity programme, based in regional clusters for parents and carers to opt into, organised by external partners rather than school based. It is very early in the planning stage and is dependent on further guidance from the Government and additional funding. Our schools will be closed in order to give staff a break and to prepare for the Autumn term. We will provide further details of the summer programme when we know more.

Uniform: On a practical note, some of you have been asking about what to do in respect of purchasing uniform for the Autumn. We will continue to be flexible about uniform for the first half of next term until we know how things are developing. For health and safety reasons, staff and children should come to school in a fresh set of clothes every day. For many of you, it is not practical to provide clean uniform every day. Therefore, pupils can wear their uniform one day if they wish to and on the next day other practical clothing. We are mindful that there have been financial hardships for many throughout the Covid 19 period and so we do not want parents and carers to be spending money on uniform they may not get the wear from. We will update this advice during the Autumn term.

Thank you for continuing to work with us throughout this period. Your patience and words of encouragement to our staff have been much appreciated.

With all best wishes

Donna

Donna Bryant
Trust Executive Leader

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