

22nd May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Following the letter we shared with you earlier this week from our CEO Mark Wilson, I am writing to update you on Springwell Leeds' position regarding the Government proposal that all schools in England reopen from June 1st 2020.

I am sure that you will have seen lots of conflicting stories and messages in the media and on social media regarding the reopening of schools, which I am certain you will agree have been unhelpful to all of us. Stories that say that children are "missing out on their education" and "falling behind" can be upsetting and worrying for parents and carers. I would like to reassure you now, that we are confident that any gaps that may have opened up for your children during this time, can be caught up when school returns.

I want to assure you that everyone at Springwell Leeds wants the children back into their school and learning as soon as possible. Crucially, we believe that the health, safety, and wellbeing of everyone in our school community – pupils, parents and staff is the most important thing at this stage of the national COVID-19 crisis.

Below, I will share with you, what we have planned in light of the Governments proposals so that you and your child are clear about the moves we are making towards reopening Springwell Leeds. The situation remains uncertain. As has been the case throughout this crisis, the plans we make now may change if guidance changes, but we have tried to make our arrangements as resilient as possible in order to keep changes to a minimum.

Firstly, because we are a Special School, the guidance for reopening means that we do not have to prioritise specific year groups, but can move carefully and gradually towards a return to school for all our children. In order to start this process, we have begun contacting the first group of parents and carers of those children that we feel we can begin to bring back into school safely. You will understand that this will be a small number at first as we will have to operate each of the sites in a very different way, in line with health and safety guidance from the Government. This means putting plans in place to make the school site as safe as possible. These include:

- a smaller number of children on site
- smaller class sizes
- shorter school days
- a shorter school week

Of course, we will discuss the details around this with you individually as and when we are able to bring your child back into school - as ever our plans are built around the individual needs of our children.

Although this process is beginning now, I have to be realistic and honest with you all and tell you that it is very unlikely that all of our children will be able to return to school before September. If circumstances change, this may change, but as things stand, a return for *all* children before the summer holidays is highly unlikely.

If you have not been contacted yet about your child returning to school, then you should assume that we cannot accommodate them on site at the current time. In these cases we will continue to support your child as we have over the last two months, providing home learning packs alongside regular check ins by phone or by staff visiting your child at home.

I know that you will understand that the plans we have put in place will be dependent on a number of factors such as the availability of staff and changes in government guidance and so may have to change if circumstances change.

Since the schools were closed, Springwell staff have made literally thousands of visits, phone calls, parcel drops, resource pack drops and home learning pack drops across the city. I assure you that this regular contact will continue if your child is not yet able to come into school. This regular contact provides you with an opportunity to raise concerns you have with staff and to discuss support for your child's learning or other needs. Please do get in touch with the site your child attends if you have any questions or problems.

We appreciate how supportively you have worked with us so far in very difficult time and hope that this will continue. I ask that you continue to check our website for updates and let us know straight away if your own contact details change.

Take care, stay safe.

Yours sincerely,



Scott Jacques
Executive Principal
Springwell Leeds Academy