



# NEWSLETTER – EDUCATIONAL UPDATE

15<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

## Re: Updates

I just wanted to say a big thank you! It continues to be a really tricky and confusing time. We are still in lockdown with some restrictions being lifted. However, the guidance continues to state we should be staying at home (where we can), we should not be meeting up or having gatherings unless it is with only one other person in an open space.

We urge you to continue to make sensible, risk assessed decisions. Continue to limit your contact with other people, continue to follow stringent handwashing and social distancing measures. Many people believe that there will be a second peak however the only people that can stop this are us! We know that the Coronavirus can be highly infectious and present initially with no symptoms. There is still so much that scientists need to learn about this virus before we can return to what will be a 'new' normal.

This virus has had a massive effect on our daily lives, our family lives and our children. For some it has made us stronger however it has affected everyone. It was this week I realised how much I missed the physical contact with my parents who live in Yorkshire. No amount of face time replaces the unconditional love, care and affection parents give to their children and grandchildren. Let's not forget the childcare and respite they give us too!

## Returning to School

The Prime Minister announced that schools would begin to re-open in June. We have read all the current guidance and of course have started to make plans for some children to begin a phased return. However, this will all be very much dependent on society's behaviour and whether the 5 tests which are outlined by the Government are passed. We do not intend to put your child or our staff at risk of health problems. Therefore, for the parents that have indicated they would intend for their child to return we will be in touch! School will not re-open on the 1<sup>st</sup> June. Any plans will be risk assessed and discussed with parents prior to school provision beginning. (Again – if the R rate stays below 0 and the 5 tests are passed) **At present, we believe the risk continues to be high.** Too high for us to begin returning to our wonderful school provision. We would love to see the children again and be back to some form of normality. I know I speak on behalf of the whole team but we would never want to put your child or ourselves at risk. Opening and then having to close would be too detrimental to our children. Already, we know we have a lot of work to do ahead.

Some of our children will be out of school routines, anxious about the virus and reluctant to re-engage in education.

Therefore, any school provision will be very different. We will be writing to parents separately and discussing this further with parents that have indicated they wish their child to return. Initially we will offer some taster sessions to the new provision; and risk assess further to inform our procedures and planning.

We intend over the coming weeks to make changes to the following:

- **Behaviour policy and practice** which will include how staff will use PPE if required during behaviour incidents. (We will show all parents a copy of the PPE that staff will be expected to use if they have to deal with behaviour that puts staff at risk e.g. spitting, hurting, damaging) This is something we do not want to do! However, we have no choice. We will also have to risk assess every child and if during their phased return to school the risk becomes too high then we will review the school provision offered. As outlined in DFE guidance.
- **Curriculum** - we have already started to purchase a range of outdoor shelters as much of the guidance suggests using the outdoors as much as possible. We are researching and developing a new interim curriculum policy to utilise an outdoor based curriculum approach, alongside the choice boards.

- **Classroom Organisation** – The classes will be very different, children may be grouped in new groups and social distancing measures will be put in place to keep each class safe. Each class base (Bubble as we are going to refer to them) will not mix with any other groups across school. There will be new entry and exit procedures.
- **School Day** – Initially we are able to offer 9:15 – 2:15 provision every day. (UNLESS THE PARENT IS A KEY WORKER AND HAS AN AGREEMENT WITH SLT) From 2:15 onwards the teachers and staff will be having their entitled break as they will work with the group and remain with their group throughout the day. This will be in order to minimise transition and other staff cross contaminating the unit. They also have to complete an enhanced cleaning schedule.

I am sure you can see returning to school is a very complex and challenging matter. It is going to take time and we will not be rushed into making decisions that could potentially put others at risk of harm. We will open and increase the children accessing provision slowly over time when the science is right!

We have fully appreciated your support, positivity and kindness towards everything the staff team are doing. We hope you can continue to work with us at ensuring the very best for you, your family and our staff team.

As we progress with our plans I will keep in touch and welcome parental discussions.

We will not be sending work home during half term (week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> May) and if you need us you will have to make contact via the family phone or school (as there will be a small team on site).

If you have any questions, please contact Alison Dodd [head@steppingstones.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:head@steppingstones.lancs.sch.uk)

Kindest Regards,

Alison Dodd

Mrs Dodd (Head teacher)