

Dear Parents,

Re: Phased return to school.

As I am sure you know, the Government has proposed that children in Primary Schools begin a phased return to their classrooms from June 1st. The current advice is that Years R, 1 and 6 will be the first to return however, there is also information suggesting that the choice of year groups may be 'context specific' and individual schools will be able to decide for themselves how and when each year group returns.

You should have received a timetable as an attachment which shows clearly how a phased return to Ickford will look. The children have been divided into two main groups, A and B and these groupings have been worked out placing a priority on ensuring siblings are all in the same group and that Critical Key Worker children are placed in morning sessions. Unfortunately, it is impossible to use criteria such as friendship, ability or age when making these decisions as we have limited options in terms of teacher numbers and classroom space.

The two groups are necessary in order to satisfy the need to distance children within each classroom according to the Public Health guidelines. Dividing the children enables us to have twice the classroom space. We are also staggering break times and will if necessary divide up the playground area. However, I have learned over the past few months, that social-distancing amongst the children is very, very difficult to achieve during recreation time and we will require parents to accept this before sending children in to school.

You will see that on a Wednesday, the school will not be open for children (apart from those currently on our Critical Key Worker or Vulnerable list) as this day will be dedicated to staff well being and preparation. There will not be any home schooling sent out for Wednesday.

As soon as we can apply this timetable in its entirety, all provision of learning activities for home will cease. Nonetheless, if we must phase the return to particular year groups, learning activities will still be provided for the class groups not yet in school. At the current time, it is recognised that parents will not have to send their children into school should they prefer not to but, once we have a class group of children coming back to school and teachers are delivering lessons, we will not be producing set learning activities for home. We will provide a list of websites that can be accessed for parents wishing to continue home schooling.

In order to try and maintain hygiene standards and reduce any possible risk of contamination, the children's classrooms will be cleaned between sessions and at the end of each day. It is very difficult to clean pens, rulers and pencils between lessons so, we would like every child to keep their own equipment and to bring a pencil case in to school each day.

The children will have the option of wearing either full school uniform or their PE kit and any that choose to wear a face mask may do so. We are also giving teachers the option to wear PPE if they wish to.

This is not an easy time for anyone and I have tried to design a timetable that reduces the risk of illness and levels of anxiety for children and staff. I can only hope it helps to reduce anxiety levels in parents. We can only make this work if people are willing to co-operate and to stick closely to the timetable provided.

Mr Ronane