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Dear Parents/Carers,

I would like to thank you all for your support and patience over the past 3-4 months. These have been very trying times for school, as I am sure they have in many families as everyone tries to balance responsibilities, family, work and the wider situation. I am certain that on occasion we will have got things wrong, or could have done things better, but I hope that you will feel that overall we've tried to do the best we can by the children and families.

I am sure you have heard the Government's intention for all children to return to school in September. It is clear that the priority is to get all children back into school full time, and it is our responsibility to do that in the safest way possible. We strongly agree that now is the right time for all children to return, and are looking forward to welcoming our families back to some form of normality from Wednesday 2nd September 2020.

The Department for Education have set out guidance to help ensure that schools are as safe as they can possibly be. Our Senior Leadership team have been working together to discuss how we can make the full re-opening work. Currently, we are working together on the details, and once we have finalised the details, we will let you know. All letters will be emailed to you and we will also send you a text message with the key information on. For now, I would like to share our initial plans with you for welcoming all our children and families back in September.

Public Health England have identified a number of essential measures that are already familiar from our wider opening of school this summer term. These include:

- A requirement that people who are ill stay at home and immediate testing for those with symptoms
- Cleaning hands thoroughly and more often than usual
- Ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- Enhanced cleaning arrangements
- Active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- Formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximize distancing wherever possible

Contacts will be reduced across school, by -

- Grouping children together
- Avoiding contact between groups
- Arranging classrooms in KS2 with forward facing desks



- Staff maintaining distance from children,
- Staff and adults maintaining distancing from each other as much as possible.

According to the guidance, 'bubbles' are still the way forward. Therefore, from September, the plan is for our children to be in Year Group Bubbles. Each Bubble will have their own lunchtime, break-time and outdoor space to play in. There will also be specific routes identified to enter and exit the building during the course of the day, in order to keep children apart from those in other year groups or classes. The guidance states that social distancing does not need to exist for the children within the bubbles during the school day.

We have made the decision that the guidance about staggered start and finish times needs to be manageable for our families. This ensures that there will be a steady stream of children arriving, and reduce the possibility of crowding, or people gathering in the playground.

Unfortunately, the guidance clearly states that the gathering of parents at the school gates and otherwise coming onto the site without an appointment is not allowed. This means that, for the time being if you need to speak to your child's teacher, you will need to arrange an appointment by telephoning the school office or alternatively speak to the member of staff on the gate. Please be reassured that we will make sure your enquiry is dealt with quickly at all times.

It is vital that you trust us to ensure that your children can return to school in the safest environment possible. We need to work together to re-establish routines and the normality of school for our children. Missing out on any further learning cannot be an option, we need to get back to what we do best, teaching and learning.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our leaders and staff for all their efforts in their work during this crisis and ensuring that we have remained open for vulnerable children and children of key workers since March, including the Easter holiday period and bank holidays. I know from the many kind messages from parents and families that you appreciate all the hard work and organisation that has gone on to provide home learning, welfare calls and free school meals and vouchers for our families. We have worked closely with the Port Vale hub to provide food hampers to families and are very grateful for their support.

I look forward to welcoming you all back in September, in the meantime, please keep checking your texts and emails for any communication from the school and stay safe.

Stay safe and have a lovely summer - hopefully we will get some more good weather!

Miss L. Irving

Head teacher

