



5<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

**Re: Update 6 from Aurora**

I promised to keep in regular contact with you about the ongoing *Coronavirus Covid-19* situation and about Aurora's response to the current national emergency.

Recently, there has been even more speculation in the press as regards to when the current national lock-down might be eased and/or when UK schools might re-open. In fact, one Sunday newspaper printed a front page headline that declared that all primary schools would re-open on 1<sup>st</sup> June. All of this media speculation is very unhelpful and therefore I thought I would write to you now, hopefully to provide you with some reassurance at this stage.

Firstly, I can absolutely assure you that no date has been announced as to when any schools will re-open, despite what anybody in the press is reporting. Thus my strong advice is for you to ignore any such speculation. At some point, as I have stated in several of my letters, we expect that UK schools may begin to partially re-open for some children over Term 6. However, as an absolute pre-requisite, any partial re-opening can only take place if the medical and scientific evidence means that the 'five key tests' (as announced by the Government) have been satisfied.

Secondly, should the evidence suggest that it is safe to consider partial re-openings, then there are still many factors to be considered, including: opening for which year groups; how many children can physically be in a class; how to ensure social distancing, both in classrooms and moving around school; the availability of sufficient staff when many are self-isolating and/or on 12 week shielding; would schools be able to provide lunch; will cleaning regimes be 'stepped up'. This small list is not exhaustive but the number of considerations in it serves to demonstrate that the country is not ready for its schools to re-open fully just yet. I still believe that we will not see 'normal' education until at least the start of the next academic year in September.

Finally, of course there are the many justifiable concerns that you will have as parents/carers about the safety of your child(ren), either travelling to school or just physically being at school. Many of you may also have work commitments if the national lock-down is eased, and will be concerned about whether you can go to work if schools cannot accommodate your child(ren) on any particular day.

Please rest assured that we understand all of your concerns. There may be some of you who will want schools to open as soon as is safe to do so. There may be others of you who may be terrified at the prospect. Our job is to find a solution for all. Please rest assured that we will respond to whatever is asked of us. However, there is one thing upon which I will not be swayed – Aurora's

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schools will not re-open, even partially, if we cannot guarantee the health and safety of children and adults within our schools.

May I reiterate the main reason for my letter today. We simply do not know, as yet, what the Government's strategy is for the next stage of dealing with the *Covid-19* emergency. Therefore, until that strategy is made clear, everything else is pure speculation. It would appear that the Prime Minister may make some kind of announcement this coming weekend. If so, then I shall write to you straight afterwards to let you know how Aurora's schools will respond. Until then however, things will stay as they are: our schools will provide educational and activity resources for children who are at home; the national FSM voucher system will remain in place and; our schools will be open to provide childcare for a small number of children of designated keyworkers, as well as for some groups of vulnerable children.

May I ask you to continue to bear with us at this time. Our staff have their own concerns in much the same way as you have, so we really do understand everybody's anxieties, especially when the future is unknown. As long as we continue to work together in partnership, we can face the next few weeks and months to ensure that we do the best for your child(ren).

Please continue to take care of yourselves and your loved ones.

With my very best wishes to you all

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