



## Abbey School

*an academy within Nexus MAT*

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Executive Headteacher: Mrs. Luci Windle

Head of School: Mr Wayne Askham



**INSPIRE...BELIEVE...ACHIEVE**

12.5.2020

Dear families,

### **Re-opening of school**

On Sunday 10 May 2020, the Prime Minister announced the Government's road map for easing the lockdown measures put in place since March, which includes the proposal for schools to re-open for more pupils from 1 June 2020.

On the evening of Monday 11 May 2020, the Department for Education issued detailed guidance for schools to re-open. Whilst mainstream schools are being encouraged to re-open for targeted year groups, special schools and hospital schools are being asked to work towards a phased return of more children and young people without a focus on specific year groups. Schools have been issued with advice on implementing a range of protective measures, including increased cleaning, reducing 'pinch points' (such as parents dropping children off at the start and end of day), and utilising outdoor space. Staff and pupils in all settings will be eligible for testing if they become ill with coronavirus symptoms, as will members of their households.

We are therefore working towards welcoming back as many children and young people as can be safely catered for in school, from 1 June. At this time, the Government have not confirmed schools will definitely re-open on this date, but we have been asked to plan for this and the Government will – based on the scientific evidence available – confirm this closer to the time.

There have been a number of queries from families about the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in schools. The most recent Government guidance states:

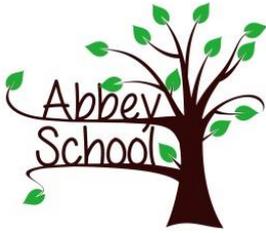
Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended [in schools]. Face coverings may be beneficial for short periods indoors where there is a risk of close social contact with people you do not usually meet and where social distancing and other measures cannot be maintained, for example on public transport or in some shops. This does not apply to schools or other education settings. Schools and other education or childcare settings should therefore not require staff, children and learners to wear face coverings.

Naturally, where we use aprons and gloves to undertake intimate care of children, this will continue to be our approach.

Where families or school are concerned about a child attending from 1 June 2020, a risk assessment will be agreed which informs shared decision making with families, school and the local authority (who commission all special school places).

Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time, and schools and colleges will not be held to account for attendance levels. However, schools will be required to report attendance to the Government.





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To ensure we have a clear understanding of demand for pupil places from 1 June (8 June), we are now asking families to confirm to school:

- If you would like to send your child(ren) back to school from 1 June 2020
- If so, would you like to send your child(ren) back part time or full time
- If not, why do you not want your child(ren) to return at this time.

We realise this is a very worrying time for all families, and that your wants and needs may change as the Government advice evolves. Equally, we cannot guarantee at this time that we can meet demand for all children to have a full time offer. Having answers to the above questions will help us plan a post-half term offer and communicate that as early as possible. In mainstream schools and college settings the basic principle is that classes should be halved, to reduce the risk of infection. We therefore need to balance the needs of families with our capacity to keep children safe at school, in line with the Government's guidance.

We are asking all families to confirm their intentions with school by Friday 15 May 2020. This then gives us the chance to review demand, plan for the re-opening of school for more pupils, and communicate this to families and transport providers with plenty of notice.

The Senior Leadership Team at Abbey will be calling each family to discuss your requirements and any concerns or questions you may have.

Please bear in mind though that, as stated above, the proposed re-opening of schools is not yet confirmed by the Government, and is subject to change. We will keep you informed of any updates once we are made aware of them.

Yours faithfully,

Luci Windle

Executive Headteacher

Warren Carratt

Chief Executive Officer

