

## 14.05.20 – Information for Parents – Please Respond

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you may be aware, schools are now asked to consider opening to more pupils after 1<sup>st</sup> June. At this point, it has not been determined that it is safe for schools to do so but only that it may be safe, and we have been asked to make preparations in case it is. You may have seen news about certain year groups being invited back but not others, **but this is not the case for special schools**. Any wider re-opening in Dorin Park will be for all years on a part-time basis (see 'Why is the offer part-time?') so all ages get some access, if it is safe for them to come back at all.

At this point, I will try to simplify the options as much as possible. You could tell us, if deemed safe to re-open:

1. You would like your child to come back to school for 2 days a week from 1<sup>st</sup> June
2. You do not want your child to come back to school for 2 days a week from 1<sup>st</sup> June  
*This could be on your own child's medical or special needs grounds, or simply because you don't think it is safe for children to go back at all. Parents are allowed to do this.*

***(Please note that the entitlement for key worker parents remains at 5 days per week if needed.)***

In order to plan for any possible re-opening, we really need to know which parents are sure at this point that they don't want their child to come back on 1<sup>st</sup> June. As a school, we will support you with this decision (unless your child is deemed to be at greater risk at home, in which case we will discuss the situation with you and see if we can resolve problems). To help you make the decision, I am sending (see *APPENDIX*) the updated information about vulnerability to complications from Covid19, taken from the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

As you will see, there are several conditions common to many children in Dorin Park in the *moderately vulnerable to complications* category. The advice for these people is: if you're at moderate risk from coronavirus, it's very important you follow the advice on [social distancing](#). This means you should stay at home as much as possible. But you can go out to work (if you cannot work from home) and for things like getting food or exercising. Unlike people at high risk, you will not get a letter from the NHS advising you to stay at home at all times.

If this applies to your child, the advice is to consult a medical professional for further guidance. As a result of the needs of our children, we cannot operate full social distancing in most of our classrooms because our children are not able to fully understand and comply at all times. This does alter their risk. To minimise this, we are putting many measures in place, but we must make you aware that risk is increased where full social distancing cannot be followed. Our main concern at present is the safety of our children and families. For those children who



INVESTORS IN PUPILS

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remain at home, we will continue to offer a home-learning package until it is safe for them to return. We will also continue our other contact with families at home.

If you are absolutely sure that you are happy for your child to return on 1<sup>st</sup> June if Government determines wider re-opening is safe, please let us know, as we will need to arrange transport and classes. Further information will follow when we are able to assess which parents want which option.

### **Why is the offer part-time?**

We need to reduce our class sizes down to four or five in each room in order to allow 2 metre social distancing as far as possible, along with a number of other changes to our working practices. More details will follow on this, but we intend that children will be taught by their form tutor in their usual class with some of their friends. As a result of the significant changes we have to put into place, and the lack of space in school, we will have to split classes into halves so that one half comes in on Monday and Tuesday and the other on Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday, the school will be deep cleaned and staff will be preparing and sending out home learning. Classes will maintain a 'pod' arrangement where they will be with each other and the same staff and will not come into contact with other pupils or staff (except for continence support). Playtimes will be rotated and we will be making use of outdoors as much as possible, although we cannot use playground equipment. Lunch and snacks will be in their classrooms.

As you can see, this is very different to how we operated before; this is to minimise the risk of infection transmission. Children will remain with their group and if anyone in the group does develop symptoms of coronavirus, they will have access to testing and the entire group will then need to self-isolate – this is a national protocol.

Children will have very different daily routines and will need their own equipment that others don't use. Play will look very different but we will still be creative about maximising what play opportunities they can have. They will not be able to go swimming or to leave their classrooms except to go to the toilet or outside to their own designated area. It is not safe for them to come back to school unless we operate in this way at this time and this is part of our risk assessment in re-opening.

I am sure you will have many questions! We will send out much more operational information soon, but I wanted to get this out to you as soon as possible so you can think about your options and to avoid confusion. There is much information in the media at present about mainstream schools, but the position for special schools was announced much later and hasn't been well publicised.

Please reply as soon as you are able, to allow us to plan fully. If you need to have a discussion with someone in school, let us know, and someone will get back to you as soon as possible. Please use Parentcomms ([parentcomms@dorinpark.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:parentcomms@dorinpark.cheshire.sch.uk)) for all responses.

With best wishes and please stay safe,

Jane Hughes

## **APPENDIX (taken from Government webpage last updated 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020)**

### **Who's at higher risk from coronavirus**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) can make anyone seriously ill. But for some people, the risk is higher.

There are 2 levels of higher risk:

- high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable)
- moderate risk (clinically vulnerable)

### **Important**

The lists below may not include everyone who's at higher risk from coronavirus and may change as we learn more about the virus.

### **People at high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable)**

People at high risk from coronavirus include people who:

- have had an organ transplant
- are having chemotherapy or antibody treatment for cancer, including immunotherapy
- are having an intense course of radiotherapy (radical radiotherapy) for lung cancer
- are having targeted cancer treatments that can affect the immune system (such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors)
- have blood or bone marrow cancer (such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma)
- have had a bone marrow or stem cell transplant in the past 6 months, or are still taking immunosuppressant medicine
- have been told by a doctor they you have a severe lung condition (such as cystic fibrosis, severe asthma or severe COPD)
- have a condition that means they have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID or sickle cell)
- are taking medicine that makes them much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids)
- have a serious heart condition and are pregnant

Information:

If you're at high risk from coronavirus, you should have received a letter from the NHS.

Speak to your GP or hospital care team if you have not been contacted and think you should have been.

### **What to do if you're at high risk**

If you're at high risk from coronavirus, you're advised to take extra steps to protect yourself.

This includes not leaving your home for any reason (called shielding).

See [what to do if you're at high risk from coronavirus](#).

### **People at moderate risk (clinically vulnerable)**

People at moderate risk from coronavirus include people who:

- are 70 or older
- are pregnant
- have a lung condition that's not severe (such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis)
- have heart disease (such as heart failure)
- have diabetes
- have chronic kidney disease
- have liver disease (such as hepatitis)

- have a condition affecting the brain or nerves (such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy)
- have a condition that means they have a high risk of getting infections
- are taking medicine that can affect the immune system (such as low doses of steroids)
- are very obese (a BMI of 40 or above)

### **What to do if you're at moderate risk**

If you're at moderate risk from coronavirus, it's very important you follow the advice on [social distancing](#).

This means you should stay at home as much as possible. But you can go out to work (if you cannot work from home) and for things like getting food or exercising.

Unlike people at high risk, you will not get a letter from the NHS advising you to stay at home at all times.

Information:

### **Pregnancy advice**

If you're pregnant and worried about coronavirus, see [advice about pregnancy and coronavirus](#).

### **People at higher risk from coronavirus**

- [If you're at high risk from coronavirus \(clinically extremely vulnerable\)](#)
- [If you live with someone at high risk from coronavirus \(clinically extremely vulnerable\)](#)
- [Pregnancy and coronavirus](#)
- [Advice about your condition and coronavirus](#)

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Next review due: 20 May 2020