

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Education and Inclusion

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Dear Headteachers & Chairs of Governors

As you are aware we have been consulting with Headteacher Association representatives and holding conference calls with Special School Leadership about the government's ambition that schools are to plan to re-open from 1st June.

We are so grateful for everyone's incredible efforts and action planning to support the potential re-opening of schools.

As a Local Authority, we fully understand that schools will be at different start points in relation to meeting the proposed requirements of the national advice and guidance. However, we would like schools to operate within a framework of support and time that allows all schools to reasonably move forward confidently and with the Local Authority's s

- This framework is as follows (you will have the support of the Local Authority). **The Local Authority acknowledges that there is very specific national advice and guidance for Special Schools in relation to increasing attendance at school, based on individual risk assessments. Therefore, when considering any increase in attendance, Special Schools should remember that government are yet to announce that their 5 tests have been met and this is currently not the case.**

Schools should also consider the following before any further decisions are made in increasing the level of attendance:

- Risk of government announcements over half term
- Views of the unions which may impact on staffing capacity



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Neither of the above are under the control of either the Local Authority or the school, and could impact on the implementation of your plans.

Based on the outcomes from your risk assessment, special schools should feel confident that they have the support of the Local Authority to work with them to explore the challenges you are currently facing to increase you attendance levels.

As a result of feedback and in considering the variables above over which we do not have control, the Local Authority, due to this uncertainty, is strongly advising Primary and Secondary schools not to widen their re-opening until, at the earliest, 8th June, and this date will, of course, be subject to any further developments in national advice and guidance. Primary and Secondary Schools will be expected, however, to continue to follow national guidance in offering places to children of key workers and vulnerable children. Special Schools are strongly advised to consider the advice given to Primary and Secondary Schools, when assessing their potential increase in attendance levels.

Special Schools should be reassured that they have support from the Local Authority in working at their own pace in increasing their attendance levels in line with the Special School national advice and guidance and if this means you choose to delay your current plan for 1st June, to at least 8th June, you have the support of the Local Authority. This additional period would allow all schools more time, if required, to further reassure their school communities, undertake training and to implement their action plans for a safe opening.

We hope that this framework, takes account of the broad range of needs of all our schools in order to move forward safely in the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely



**Mark Parkinson and David McNaught
Directors of Education and Inclusion**