



Colchester High School

20th May 2020

Dear Parents

Thank you for your support since our return from the Easter break during which time we have transitioned fully to online teaching and learning. I am very proud of the way our staff have risen to the challenge and for their commitment and creativity in delivering such excellent provision at such short notice. I am also very proud of our children to see how well they have adapted so quickly to this unfamiliar approach to learning.

As you will know, the government has requested that we reopen our school and classrooms to Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from 1 June. We are very pleased to reopen for these classes as we believe that children need their friends and the nurturing school environment, and the classroom is definitely the best place for their education. We are following the Department for Education's guidance closely as we prepare for reopening. These measures include teaching small classes or clusters of pupils (often referred to as 'bubbles'), social distancing in the school buildings as much as possible and an enhanced cleaning regime both at the end of the day and during the day – as well as regular and careful handwashing. We are making preparations now to make sure all this is in place and I would like to assure you that we shall only reopen after completing a thorough risk assessment.

Although we understand it is not possible to eliminate all risk, with the right precautions in place, schools are considered to be very low risk environments for the coronavirus. Furthermore, we are also of the opinion that children's mental health and well-being can suffer in isolation – a view that is being increasingly shared amongst the medical experts – so there are risks in children continuing to stay at home by themselves away from their peers for prolonged periods of time.

I do need to point out that, as our teaching staff return to the classroom fulltime, we will no longer be able to teach these groups online. Of course, we understand that there will be some children who are shielding or who have underlying health conditions who will not be able to return to school and other parents might choose not to send their children into school. In these cases we shall be providing their curriculum at home as we did in the immediate aftermath of the closure of school in March, combined with regular check-ins with their teacher.

We are really pleased to report that, following our recent survey, a significant number of our parents in the year groups in question have indicated that they are keen to return their children to school.



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In order that we can plan effectively, I would be grateful if parents in the relevant year groups could complete the survey they will receive shortly. This will just be a simple Yes/No regarding your intention to send in your child. We respectfully request that you give us a minimum of 48 hours' notice should you subsequently change your mind.

We look forward to a time when all our children can come back to school; in the meantime, other year groups will continue with their current online learning programme.

Finally, I would like to clarify the school's position on fees for the rest of the summer term for those who are returning to school. Although we did communicate previously that once schools reopen we would revert to normal fees, we have decided to waive this for the remainder of the summer term. The exceptional circumstances, the economic situation, and the value we place on our relationship with you – our parent community – means we have decided the existing discount will continue for this academic year. We hope that this, combined with the freezing of tuition fees for next year, will go some way to assisting you.

Thank you once again for your support of the school this summer term, and for your encouragement and feedback. As ever, please let me know if you have any questions.

Best regards

David Young

Headteacher