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Plans for extending pupils places June 20

Dear Parent/Guardian,
the Government has asked schools to make contingency plans for extending the number of school places from June 1st as part of the easing of COVID-19 lockdown measures. I am writing to you today to let you know how we intend to proceed. Our plans have been drawn up with full consideration of the Government advice distributed to schools as well as Wigan L.A.'s advice to schools.

What we have done so far:

- Carried out a detailed risk assessment. Which we will make available today on our school website for parents to view so that they can make an informed decision about their child's return to school.
- Carried out an audit of staff availability taking into account staff's own health needs where they fall into a vulnerable category where they are safer working from home.
- Discussed with school Governors their preferred road map.

What we have concluded:

- Staff availability severely limits how many children we can offer places to in June safely. In order to comply with the safety guidelines issued to us we will not be able to invite Year 6 pupils back into school in the first instance.
- The school Governors wish to maintain as long as possible the good level of support we have been offering to pupils not in school so that these pupils are not penalised.
- Governors wish to follow the priority order for in school places set out by Government. That is children of key worker families and vulnerable children first, then consider places for children in Year Reception and then consider places for children in Year 1.
- We have had to be strict with requests for key worker places to date in order in the first phase of lockdown to keep staff and pupils safe by not admitting excessive numbers. We have had to limit the number of key worker places in school by using the criteria for priority of –
 - a) Child is in a two key worker household
 - b) Child is in a single parent key worker household with no partner available to have the child.

Governors now feel we are able to relax these criteria and offer places to key worker children where there is only one key worker in the household.

- Wigan L.A. has concluded that there will be insufficient time to prepare schools to open up to more pupils for the week beginning June 1st and that June 8th is a more realistic date. The school agrees with this conclusion.





Our road map.

Schools will not open up to more pupils until the Government tells us it is safe to do so. It has set 5 conditions which need to be met nationally before this can take place. In this letter I am outlining our preparation for this green light whenever it comes. No specific dates and offers can be made at this time, however we are working on the assumption that we are planning for extending school places from June 8th.

1. We invite parents who are key workers who wish to request an in school place for their child from June 8th to email Headteacher@admin.chowbent.wigan.sch.uk with their request. They will need to supply school with their job title and role, their employer's details and employer's contact number. Children who currently have a key worker place in school need not apply again. We will now consider households where there is only one key worker. Requests need to be received by 27th May.
2. We invite parents who plan to take up the offer of an in school place for their Reception class child to email Headteacher@admin.chowbent.wigan.sch.uk to inform school. They will need to supply their child's name. If we do not hear from you we will assume you will not be taking up an offer of a place. The Government at this time strongly recommend children take up the offer of a school place, however at the moment any parent who chooses not to will not be penalised or fined in the usual way. Requests need to be received by 27th May.
3. We will use the returns from steps 1 and 2 to assess the numbers likely to take up offer of places from June 8th and use this to decide if there is scope to offer further places to children from Year 1. If there is then we will contact Year 1 parents and ask them to let us know if they would take up the offer of a place for their child.
4. Once new key worker request are verified and numbers likely to attend school are known we will make firm offers of in school places once school opens up more widely. To help with this and our staffing it will not be helpful if parents of Year Reception or Year 1 do not respond then later decide that they do now want a place as we may be unable to accommodate them. Also once a place has been set aside for your child, including key worker children, your child must attend school every day it is open. We should be able to offer firm offers around 2nd June.
5. If school opens more widely on June 8th we will close at 1pm to current key workers on Friday 5th June in order to do a final deep clean and ensure all classrooms are correctly prepared to receive new pupils back.



6. The school will see how the new arrangements are working for two weeks before reassessing the situation to see if additional pupils can be brought back into school and if it is possible to bring further staff back into school safely. We will also review our risk assessment from school opening up to ensure that the measures planned for are working.

To help parents make their decisions we strongly advise them to read the school risk assessment so that they are fully aware of how school will operate including what we require of them. They will need to be aware that there will be staggered start and end times for the school day and that lunch arrangements will be different to usual.

For pupils not returning to school in this first phase we will continue to supply work and support as we do now.

I thank you on behalf of the whole Chowbent team for your support and understanding in the task that lays ahead of us.

Regards

Mr J Randle
Head Teacher

