

Learning together to be the best we can be

Headteacher - Nichola Irving



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Dear Parents

Following the Government's announcement last Sunday, I am writing to update you on the potential phased re-opening of school, as we all deal with the challenging circumstances of this pandemic and the impact it is having on all of us.

Firstly I would like to thank you all for your continued support, including staff and families. For some families it has been essential that school has remained open throughout, including during Easter and bank holidays. I imagine, at times, it has been difficult for some parents to leave their child at school so they can go and do their key jobs at this challenging time. Many staff, as parents, have had this same dilemma. However, I know I speak on behalf of all staff at Horton Grange when I say we believe it was right to provide this provision for our children and families supporting key workers.

Moving forward, our preference and ideal is of course for school to find a way of re-opening for all our children, but our first priority must be that it is safe and manageable so that parents (and staff) can have confidence in our planning and approach. We are currently planning this and will be guided by further information for the Department of Education, the Local Authority and the Unions.

I understand that the current uncertainties may be causing some anxiety and that many of you may not wish for your child to return at this time. Some may be shielding, deemed vulnerable or feel that their child is safer at home. In the following few months, parents will be best placed to make this decision and the Government have advised that there will be no legal or monitoring processes for attendance. However, I appreciate this has to be balanced with possible concerns for your child's learning and progress.

As we plan for re-opening, there are a number of vital factors to be taken into consideration. As an example, we must consider how much of our building can be cleaned to the required standard every day and therefore how many classrooms we can safely open. This is in addition to other health and safety factors, which limit the number of children we can have in school at one time. Guidance suggests no more than 15 children per class but this very much depends on the size of the classroom and every school will be different.

Horton Grange will therefore be proceeding with caution. The ambition is to re-open in June however this must be a phased approach. Schools will be different to how they were before lockdown and the children will need to be supported to understand this. We may need to offer part time hours and staggered start and finish times – we will do our best!

Government guidance suggests schools open, if criteria can be met safely for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, whilst continuing to provide places for the children of key workers and vulnerable children. At Horton Grange, if all children take up their places on this model there could be approx. 350 children in school. Therefore, this needs to be managed carefully and gradually.



With this in mind, it is most likely that we will invite the Year 6 children and Year 1 children only of the recommend year groups initially. For us this would start on Tuesday 2 June, as school was scheduled to be closed on Monday 1 June. **School will remain closed on Monday 1 June** for all children, including children who currently have places linked to the key worker system. This will allow a final deep clean and staff training around new systems and processes.

Once Year 6 and Year 1 have returned, we will then be able to begin to consider if and how we are able to invite our younger children back and in the longer term possibly other year groups by regular review of risk assessments. I cannot guarantee that other year groups will return before the end of the summer term. I urge the parents of Nursery and Reception children not to expect to return on the 2 June opening date, we will advise you when we feel it is safe for these children to return. We hope this will not be too long.

Home learning will continue as usual for other year groups. However it may be more difficult to maintain the same level of remote education provision as more class teachers will now be needed to provide face to face provision at school – we will try our best. In these circumstances, school will guide you to additional remote education platforms which can provide additional support for learning.

Please also note that school will remain open to our most vulnerable and key worker children except on **Monday 1 June**.

I must also be transparent with you all and make clear that if and when these year groups return school cannot operate as it has. For example measures may include:

- Children will be with one / two adults in one classroom and not necessarily the same group of children or teacher they were with in March.
- They will remain in the classroom for the duration of the day and they will not be able to mix with children from other classrooms.
- They will sit at desks which are 2m apart, including younger children on return unless social distancing measures are relaxed.
- They will work at desks and not have carpet time.
- In order to support social distancing measures, days may be staggered and hours may be different depending on number of children attending.
- Their classrooms will have non-essential furniture and all soft furnishings removed.
- Children will not be able to bring equipment or books from home. They will be provided with their own set of equipment to be used only by them.
- The use of outdoor play equipment will be limited due to the need for rigorous cleaning.
- Lessons may involve a lot of independent learning and /or teaching from a 2m distance where possible.
- Only one parent can bring a child to school and cannot enter the school building.
- Staff will be provided with PPE (providing it can be sourced) for intimate care and first aid. Some staff may choose to wear PPE at additional times to support confidence in returning to the work place. Whilst this is not recommended in the Government guidance staff can exercise the right to do this should they wish.
- Walking on the left of corridors in single file at a distance of 2m will be strictly implemented.
- Assemblies and usual end of year events will not be able to take place unless restrictions are changed.
- Our kitchen will initially not produce hot dinners but will provide a packed lunch to eat in the classroom. Children entitled to free school meals and universal free school meals (Rec, Year 1

and Year 2) will be provided with this free of charge. Other children may choose to bring their own packed lunch or order and pay using normal school systems.

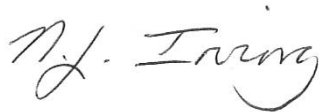
These are only some of the possible changes and more will be communicated as we continue with risk assessments, receive further guidance and numbers potentially grow. I do not wish to alarm you but I do want to be transparent. I also have to be realistic that, whilst measures are put in place to reduce risk, nothing is ideal and **social distancing cannot be guaranteed, as recognised by Government guidance**. We want normality too and to see all the children of Horton Grange back but we must do this with caution.

Finally, you must trust myself and the staff at Horton Grange and continue to work with us. We genuinely care for your children and have their best interests and safety at heart.

Further communication will follow but in the meantime if you are a parent of a child in Year 1 or Year 6, you will be contacted in the next 48 hours to establish whether you will be sending your child to school on the **2 June**. Gathering this information is essential for us to be able to plan a safe way forward.

At this point we are not requesting this information from parents of 2 year olds, Nursery, Reception or Year 2 to Year 5. You will be contacted in the near future.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "N. Irving".

Mrs N Irving
Headteacher