

Brundall School
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22nd May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Since the Prime Minister made his announcement nearly two weeks ago, schools have been preparing for a phased return.

I know from our survey of parents that a majority of parents are interested in their children returning to school but wanted information about both the safety aspects and 'what it would look like'. Staff, also, have been concerned to think about the health and safety aspects and working arrangements for a return.

Yesterday I attended a virtual meeting with approximately 50 Norfolk Headteachers, and I know that my colleagues across the county are finding it difficult to meet the suggestion that we re-open in a phased way to Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 on June 1st. While there are some schools that think they might be able to manage this, most I spoke to are looking at June 8 as the earliest date, and some have already decided that June 15 is more realistic.

As well as timings, the difficulty of fitting children into a 'Covid-ready' environment has thrown up problems that schools are responding to in different ways. Classrooms were not designed to give two metre social distancing spaces, nor were children designed to keep to social distancing rules. Schools are responding to this by beginning to modify classrooms, removing items, and looking at guidance for new working practices. Some are coping with space requirements by having one year group across the whole school, so that no other children will return, others by taking a two days on, clean, next group in for two days approach, others are considering morning and afternoon rotations. Plans have also been changing as new guidance from government and local authority was published over the last ten days.

To let Brundall parents and carers know where we are:

The government has clarified that it understands schools must prioritize. The first priority stated by the government continues to be for children of essential workers and vulnerable children, and we will plan to maintain our provision for these children in providing care during the school day following half term.

The second is the phased return, beginning with Year R/Year 1 and Year 6. This will happen if the government conditions for a continued fall in the infection rate and other measures are met. My understanding as of today is that the government will announce their view on this on May 28th.

On Wednesday evening I met with the governor's steering committee to discuss our approach to this new phase. They were supportive of a steady and safe approach, making sure staff and parents know what measures are in place and recognizing the constraints of changed ways of working, and also ensuring there is sufficient time to put the appropriate measures in place. Any return at this point will not look like the school day used to look!



Therefore, the week of June 1st will continue to see provision for Essential worker and vulnerable children while teachers prepare classrooms and work out the guidelines for new procedures for a socially distanced return. If all measures are in place, we would then look to a phased return of a R/Y1 and Y6, with the classes split into two groups, A and B, one group attending the first week and one group the second. These first two trial weeks would be for mornings and lunch. We will have a 15 minute window where we will stagger drop off and pick up. Staff in other year groups would continue home/school learning arrangements and cover the essential worker and vulnerable children rota.

Before this happens, much may change, and it may be that we will have to amend and alter or postpone our plans depending on advice and government decisions. I will keep you informed when there is relevant information to share, including our work at changing practices and classrooms in advance of a staged return.

I know parents and staff would like to see children back in school and learning. I know that all our community want us to make sure we do it in a timely and safe way when it does happen.

Thank you for responding to the survey and continued support.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Stuart-Sheppard". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

R. Stuart-Sheppard
Headteacher