



Hipsburn Primary School, Lesbury, ALNWICK, Northumberland. NE66 3PX

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Headteacher Mr Kevin Moloney

16th June 2020

Dear Parents,

Between 20th March and 1st June, in line with scientific advice, nurseries, schools and colleges have remained open only to a priority group of children. Hipsburn Primary has been open every week day since 20th March, including the Easter and Summer half-term holidays, for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers.

On May 16th the Education Secretary announced plans for the "cautious phased return" for those Primary school children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 and on 28th May the Prime Minister said schools "can welcome back children in key transition years - Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6."

From 16th May Hipsburn began planning for the return of the children in these 4 year groups. The staff have spent a great deal of time completing statutory risk assessments, creating 'bubbles' of no more than 15, arranging staggered drop-off and pick-up times and rearranging and rationalising classrooms and instigating enhanced cleaning regimes.

As of 15th June all of these children whose parents wanted them to return to school, as well as the critical worker and vulnerable children from across all year groups are in school for almost their usual full school week; uptake from the 4 returning year groups has been very high and staff are now combining face to face teaching with remote lesson setting and support.

The Education Minister's update on 15th June said that Primary schools in England are to be given greater flexibility to invite back more pupils if - having invited back the pupils in eligible year groups - they are able and feel ready to do so within the existing guidance.

As part of the Alnwick Partnership of local primary schools Hipsburn had already been involved in discussions as to how year groups 2, 3, 4 and 5 could be brought back into school before the Summer holidays. Although common consensus is that every school wishes to do as much as they can every school is different in terms of its size, layout, staffing levels and percentages of children that would be returning.

Mr Moloney has kept in regular contact with me throughout the pandemic and as Chair I have seen for myself the risk assessments and been into school to see how the setting has been adapted. We have had honest and open conversations about the impact of opening up the school to more children. The government's guidance was specifically to bring back Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 and Hipsburn has achieved this. However, Hipsburn has neither the space nor the staff to safely invite year 2, 3, 4 and 5 children back at this time. This will be kept under review and if circumstances change that allow some more children back into school safely before the Summer break school will contact you giving plenty of notice.

Yours sincerely

Allison Wort, Chair of Governing Body

