



To: All Headteachers

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Ask For: Mr Matt Dunkley
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Dear Colleague

This week primary schools welcomed back pupils in three year groups who had last been in school over 9 weeks ago. This resulted in over 10,000 pupils attending school on Monday and nearly 16,500 today. We expect that number to grow over the coming days as more schools phase in opening of year groups and parental confidence grows.

I was incredibly pleased to hear that the wider opening has gone well, with both staff and children settling into the new routines of school life and adapting quickly to an environment which is both familiar and alien. I was especially pleased to hear that initial anxiety held by some children was quickly eased and pupils left school happy after experiencing fulfilling days and were eager to return.

This success is due to the hard work school leaders and staff have put into preparing for this week and also reflects how schools have maintained strong links with children and parents throughout the past 9 weeks.

Parental confidence is higher than many anticipated and is growing. Some schools have already welcomed back to the classroom almost all children in particular year groups. At the same time there is growing demand from key workers, including school staff. This will present some schools with the challenge of having a greater demand for places than their current class configurations can accommodate given the social distancing measures currently in place.

Schools have remained open for vulnerable children and children of key workers throughout this period. Our view is that the wider opening of schools should not be to the detriment of this provision and that, in line with Government guidance, these pupils hold the greatest priority when capacity is limited. In order to accommodate increased demand schools may need to first review existing configurations, for example revisiting whether bubbles accommodating fewer than 15 children could reasonably be increased in size or whether other areas of the school could accommodate the establishment of additional bubbles, recognising that those areas may not be able to accommodate a full group of 15.

Your experience of how well the school has functioned with increased numbers this week will be able to inform this review alongside the experiences of other schools. It may be that neighbouring schools have surplus space for the establishment of an

additional group, links between Infant and Junior schools are likely to represent the most feasible opportunities for this. Whether due to space or staffing restrictions it may not be possible to increase capacity to meet all demand, it may be necessary to reduce the provision offered for Year 6, which hold the lowest priority within Government guidance.

The most recent Government updates include clarity for where Out of School provision is operating on your school site. Ofsted registered out of school provision can only provide childcare to the children who are currently attending school. This provision must operate on the school premises, be able to follow the same health protection procedures as the school and the headteacher must be satisfied with the arrangements. The out of school provision that operates within your school can only provide childcare to the children of your school. All other out of school settings are not able to reopen at this time.

If you have an out of school provision operating on your school site you must be working with them to ensure they follow the same arrangements as your school, such as keeping children in the same small consistent groups that they are in during the school day.

Childcare providers should not be offering care for school aged children (regardless of year group) during the school day, this includes out of school and early years providers (excluding childminders). If out of school providers are unable to implement the same protective measures as the school, they should continue to remain closed for the time being.

Childminders can provide care for children of all ages from 1st June in line with their current Ofsted registration and within the usual limits on the number of children they can care for.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures#main-changes-to-previous-guidance>

Finally, colleagues in the NHS have advised us that on the 12th June, Infection Prevention and Control Specialists within NHS England are offering a regional webinar for schools to fully explain the guidance for PPE. This will be recorded to ensure all schools have an opportunity to review the information. Further details to follow.

Yours sincerely



Matt Dunkley
Corporate Director
Children, Young People and Education