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Parents/Carers

Dear Parents/Carers

12 June 2020

I am writing to update you on Nottinghamshire schools. Our schools have remained open to vulnerable children and those of key workers since March 23rd. Staff have worked through holiday periods, including Bank Holidays.

Our primary schools were asked to undertake risk assessments to decide when and how they could start to phase a reopening for pupils in Year R, Year 1 and Year 6. Special schools were also asked to undertake risk assessments to decide how they could phase the return of more pupils. This planning has been thorough, and each school plan will be different because the building design and number of staff available impact significantly on what can be safely offered. I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to all school staff for their dedication and hard work at this difficult time and to parents for their patience and understanding.

Many pupils have, and are continuing, to learn at home. I am aware your schools have been providing work and/or sign posting you to resources and websites that you can access to help your children to continue to learn. I have received many positive anecdotes from parents and colleagues about the successful and innovative learning opportunities that parents have been creating across the county and I would like to thank you for your continued support and understanding. Teaching can be difficult but can also be rewarding. I am sure that this is a time that both you, and your children will never forget.

On Tuesday 9th June, Gavin Williamson, the Secretary of State for Education said a "cautious phased return" was the "most sensible approach to take" for schools across England. He also confirmed that, contrary to previous hopes, the government would not be able to welcome all primary children back to school before the summer.

Schools across Nottinghamshire have increased the number of pupils attending since 1st June. These pupils are being taught in small groups, referred to as bubbles by many schools. Children in school may not be with their usual class mates or teachers, in some cases they may be accessing school part time. Your child may now be attending school or learning at home or a mixture of both.

I recognise that these differences may seem frustrating, or confusing for you and for your children, but I would like to reassure you that the decisions that Headteachers are making are carefully risk assessed and are prioritising the safety and well-being of your children. The size of your child's school building and availability of staff will inevitably determine exactly how many children can return

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to school and in some cases, our schools simply have been unable to accept every child whose family wishes them to return to school. The government guidance is clear that vulnerable children and those of critical workers should be offered places ahead of the target years (Year R, Year 1 & Year 6) and we have seen an increase in the demand for places from critical workers. I have assured school leaders that they have my full support and deepest respect as they welcome more children back to school.

I will write to you again as soon as we have clearer information from the government about the expectations for September.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Pettigrew', written in a cursive style.

COLIN PETTIGREW

Corporate Director

Children, Young People and Schools

Nottinghamshire County Council