



Dorchester Learning Centre
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Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to update you on our progress in respect of the prospect of schools opening more widely from 1st June 2020. I am sure you will have read much about the wider opening of schools over the past week. Given how close it is to the half-term break and acknowledging that our world of education is inextricably linked to the wider issues around public health, it does not seem sensible to be making high stakes decisions at this time. Therefore, we will remain pragmatic and assess the situation against updated guidance in early June, thus meaning we will open for key worker and vulnerable students on 1st June only.

As a school, we are totally committed to ensuring that the health and safety of every individual is a priority - your children, our staff, the wider community. A significant amount of risk assessment and mitigation is currently under way so that we can be satisfied that the wider opening of school will be done in the safest way possible.

I am writing to outline a number of approaches that we are currently taking in school. In my letter to you last week I outlined the additional care that is being taken with cleaning and hygiene.

- May half term week – school will be closed, as it normally would be during this week, in order for the school to be deep cleaned.
- Monday 1st June – school will re-open for students. Please see attached timetable if your child is attending. **If you haven't requested schooling then please do not worry. We will not expect your student back until further discussions have taken place.**

It is important to note that this will not be 'business as usual' and we will be following the "pod" method recommended by the government. This containment model means that:

- Children will be working in groups of no more than 8 children.
- Within these groups of 8 children, contact will be limited to this "pod." Therefore, when children are assigned to a pod and an adult, children or adults will **not be allowed** to move from one pod to another. Once pods are set, we will not be moving children to limit risk of infection.
- Furniture in classrooms will be limited and will be cleaned thoroughly.
- Resources will be limited to ensure those available can be cleaned regularly. Resources will not be shared between pods and students will have individual pencil cases and art resources.
- IT equipment will be wiped down before and after every use and students will try to use the same computer throughout the day.



- There will be additional signage and children will remain in a segregated area during the school day to support the efforts to reduce close contact. Staff will use the outside learning environment as much as possible.
- Hand sanitiser will be available at all times to students and we will continue with our hand washing culture.
- Drop off and collection times will be staggered as per students' timetables. Food will be provided to children in school and Free School Meal vouchers will be provided to eligible children if they remain at home.

Currently, adults need to social distance from one another. To help us reduce the risk of infection in our community, please adhere to the following school rules:

- Parents and visitors will generally not be permitted into the school building, unless by prior arrangement. If you wish to discuss any concerns, you should do so through the school office by telephone or email.
- Only one parent to bring their child to and from school.
- If you arrive early, please remain in your car until it is time to drop off / collect your child.

Wellbeing

Throughout this period, I have highlighted the importance of mental wellbeing. I honestly believe this needs to remain a focus and we will continue to support all families with this. Please do speak to a member of staff during your welfare call if there is anything we can do. **To help with this I have enclosed a pack of Uno cards to provide some amazing family fun.**

Curriculum

We will be attempting to put in place a recovery curriculum, all students will have the opportunity to access the same resources through Doodle in Key Stage 3/4 and Seesaw in primary. More detail will follow regarding this in a letter next week and again support is readily available with this.

Flexibility

Please be aware that the current situation is constantly changing. Whilst we hope to be able to maintain the provision outlined above, there may be circumstances where it becomes impossible to do this especially if staff become ill or must isolate. As always, we will keep in constant communication if this is the case and thank you for your understanding.

In closing I would like to thank you for your understanding and support. We have received a lot of positive feedback and it is genuinely moving to read your appreciation for what we are trying to do. My staff also really appreciate it!

We will do all we can to keep you informed and to do the very best we can for the children in our care.

Yours faithfully

Phil Midworth

Phil Midworth
Headteacher

