



Councillor Danny Thorpe
Leader, Royal Borough of Greenwich

Friday 22nd May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

You are no doubt aware of the government's decision to begin a phased return to school for our children and young people. For many of you this will be very worrying and we want you to know that we don't just understand these worries, we share them too. At the Council we are doing everything we can to ensure that when your child goes back to school, they do so safely.

It is a government decision to reopen schools and not one that we have made or have any control over. We are therefore focussing our attention and resources on supporting schools to ensure that every possible safety measure is in place to protect your child when they do go back - and on lobbying the government to make the necessary arrangements to facilitate and monitor that safe return.

We all know how important going to school is for our children – not just to receive the education that could become the gateway to their dreams, but as a community that cares for them and protects them. During the lockdown the majority of Royal Greenwich schools have remained open for the children of keyworkers and our vulnerable children, and our heartfelt thanks must go to the fantastic staff across our schools who have made this happen. They have been at the forefront of our response and we are so proud of the work they have done.

Unfortunately, many of our vulnerable children have not been making use of their schools, meaning it has been much more difficult to keep a check on their welfare. Getting back to regular school days as soon as it is safe to do so, will be of benefit for all our young people.

We are now planning the return of nursery, reception, year 1 and year 6 children on 1 June in line with the government's announcement. Each school in our borough is different in terms of layout, staff and children, so there will be differences in the approach taken. It is right and proper that school leaders and governors develop these local plans and determine what works best for their school and their pupils. Many schools are now conducting surveys with their parents and carers to assess the level of demand and plan accordingly. We ask you to make sure that you take part in these, which will help all of our schools make the correct arrangements.

The safety of children and staff is our absolute priority and we will not compromise on this. The only return to school the Council will support is a safe one. We do not agree that the government's suggestion that all children will return to school by the end of the academic year can be done safely

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and we have joined with local authorities from across the country and unions to state our very deep concerns to Department for Education.

For now, our promise to you as parents and carers is that we will work with schools, the government and unions to ensure a safe return. Our schools, headteachers and governors are doing their best to plan reopening and will be in touch with you to keep you informed of their arrangements.

Education is so very, very important to the futures our children have yet to see – please join us in making sure their safe return to school provides the opportunities they must not miss out on.

Yours Sincerely



Cllr Danny Thorpe
Leader, Royal Borough of Greenwich



Cllr Matthew Morrow
Cabinet Member, Children and Young People
