



# Hillside Specialist School & College

Providing exceptional education for all students

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Dear Parents and Carers

You will be aware from the Prime Minister's speech on Sunday, that the Government have revised their plans for schools and have identified certain year groups that they have priorities in the phased return of pupils, which they plan to begin from the 1st of June.

A government document was published on Monday on the COVID-19 recovery strategy, accompanied by guidance on the proposed reopening of schools. Reception, Year 1 and year 6 are the year groups that have been identified as being priorities for mainstream schools, with the guidance for Special Schools being more flexible on the age of pupils, depending on each individual setting. Schools are required to put in place suitable health and safety measures around social distancing, reduced class sizes, safe transitioning around school and the provision of suitable Personal Protective Equipment where applicable.

I am currently assessing our capacity to follow the suggested guidance of increasing places to pupils in Reception, year 1 and 6 and we are liaising with the Local Authority on what specific measures are required in schools to effectively manage the risk and rate of transmission of the virus. Can I assure you, we will do what we believe is safe for our pupils and staff in taking what is the first of the small steps in getting pupils back into school. The government plan to review the effectiveness of this phased return, before possibly increasing the number of pupils further during July.

While considering the needs of the additional recommended year groups, we aim to continue providing support to families of other pupils, either through part time attendance in school on a rota or through our online Google Classroom resource. My message to parents is that remaining at home is still the safest option for families and our pupils, but that in order for the country to make progress, many of you will look to return to work if you are no longer able to work from home.

I am waiting on additional information which we expect to receive early next week to finalise our plans, at which point I will write to you again and contact those parents of the prioritised year groups regarding arrangements for after half term. As things currently stand, it is unlikely I will be able to offer any places in school during the week of half term in which we will conduct a deep clean of the buildings. Unfortunately we do not have the capacity, nor is it safe practice for larger numbers of pupils to return to school any sooner than planned.

Further information is due to be shared with schools from the Local Authority's Human Resources team, Transport Departments and Schools Catering Service, to assist in ensuring the safety of all pupils and staff. In keeping pupils and PA's safe on transport, there is currently strict social distancing guidance on the size of vehicles required and the number of passengers permitted, which will obviously impact on how we get pupils back into school.

Yours sincerely

Paul Leaper - Headteacher

