



Tuesday 14th July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope that you and your families are well and staying safe. We appreciate your continued support in the way we are responding to the national crisis and in the partial opening of our schools. We are missing the day to day hubbub of a normal school day, especially as the end of term fast approaches.

All our schools have been working flat out since lock down was first implemented. From the 1st of June our staff have had to grapple with trying open our schools to groups of children, other than Key Worker and Vulnerable groups. Ensuring that they are supporting the Government in their pledge but at the same time, making measured decisions about the safety of pupils and staff.

We very much want to thank our staff and head teachers who have worked tirelessly to keep our school open for our families. This, as I am sure you can appreciate, has been a logistical nightmare especially as so much of the information has arrived in large quantities, with little time to plan properly and with information that is often contradictory. Each school has had to make its own arrangements, with risk assessments, that meet its building's layout and staffing numbers available to be deployed. Some of our schools have very high numbers of Key Worker and Vulnerable which has made admitting further children a challenge. Unfortunately, what has been offered by one school cannot be offered by a neighbouring school. This is the landscape in which our schools are finding themselves. We understand the frustration that some families have felt. However, the safety of our children has been paramount through out this process.

Our staff and their leaders have managed to maintain open, friendly and supportive environments for our children at this very worrying time. They have worked hard with parents, carers and families online and by phone. They supported concerned and worried families struggling with the effects of managing work and children at home. This is what we have come to expect from our dedicated workforce in the Gosforth Schools. They always go that extra mile and without their dedication and professionalism we would not have been able to have achieved as much as we have. They deserve our gratitude and our support for their all their efforts to limit the impact on all our families.

They are working very hard and will continue to do so throughout the summer holidays to prepare to welcome children back in September. However, it is not a simple matter of "business as usual". Return to school still remains conditional with regard to meeting the Government's tests for unlocking the restrictions that have been in place. These risk assessments cover every aspect of school life for returning pupils and members of staff. The September opening will have another set of logistical implications for increasing the number of bubbles within our schools and in managing timetables. It will have implications for how our schools manage drop off and collection by our parents and carers. As well as how we manage lunchtimes and playtimes with increased numbers. But if the past 4 months are anything to go by our staff will as always manage these changes with creativity and flair. Each school will communicate their specific arrangements to their parents.

Thank you again for your patience and understanding throughout this difficult time. Thank you to our head teachers and our staff for all that they have done and continue to do to keep our children safe. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Elliott
Chair of GST