



Hillcrest School
East View Avenue, East Farm
Cramlington, NE23 1DY
Tel 01670 713632

Email: Admin@hillcrest.northumberland.sch.uk

13.5.20

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well during this challenging time.

I am sure you have lots of questions following the Prime Minister's announcements about schools phased reopening in June, beginning with children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. The situation is different for special schools:

Special schools

Special schools, special post-16 institutions and hospital schools should work towards welcoming back as many children and young people as can be safely catered for in their setting. **They may want to prioritise attendance based on key transitions and the impact on life chances and development, and to consider creating part-time attendance rotas so that as many children as possible can benefit from attending their setting. Special settings should work with local authorities and families to ensure that decisions about attendance are informed by existing risk assessments for their children and young people, which should be kept up to date.** (From guidance: Actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June)

Our main priority at Hillcrest is the safety of our pupils, staff and all of our families. Today I am meeting with the Local Authority and some other Special Head teachers to discuss what a phased opening of our schools might be like, if it is safe to open. Before we can even begin to plan increasing numbers in schools or even decide which children to prioritise, we must consider:

- Social distancing
- PPE
- Transport
- Vulnerability of pupils
- Staffing
- How many children can be safely catered for within our setting

Over the next 2 weeks we will create a plan that works for our Community that 'prioritises attendance based on key transitions and the impact on life chances and development.' At this stage, it may only be safe to offer part time.

We will be guided by advice from Government, which I am waiting for more detailed guidance, and the impact it will have on our school. I am aware that some of you do not want to send your child back to school at this stage. You will certainly not be penalised for this as the DfE guidance does not indicate that attendance of special schools is mandatory at this point.

I hope you are finding the weekly paper based activity packs useful that are either posted out or hand delivered by staff. We do not want to disadvantage any of our children if they do not have access to online learning. However, it is not compulsory or an expectation that this work is completed. We understand that for many parents, this would be an impossible task.

I will provide you with further information in the coming days and weeks once I am able to do so. For the moment, the current arrangements in place will remain the same.

Thank you for your continued support at this difficult time. We are looking forward to seeing the children again when it is safe to do so. On behalf of the staff and Governors at Hillcrest I wish you continued good health.

Your sincerely

Mrs Mead

Head teacher