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Phase One Reopening – information for parents of children in Pre-School, Reception and Year 1

Dear Parents

I hope you have had a good week, it has certainly been a busy one for us in school. Since the announcement of a potential reopening of school from 1st June, staff and governors have been working to try to prepare for this. There has been a lot of information and guidance on doing this and we have been preparing ourselves, and the school for this possibility. All of which is dependent on if the government is satisfied that it has reached its five tests to be able to move into the next phase of moving out of lockdown.

As part of this preparation, I have put together two documents to help prepare parents and children for returning to school when we are able. These will be attached to the email along with this letter. I would urge you to look through this information carefully as it has on it lots of details to familiarise yourself and your child(ren) with before we get back to school. There are going to be quite a few changes as we get used to a new way of working, all designed to help keep everyone in our school community safe and healthy.

One key bit of information for those returning is that the governors and I have taken to decision to close early on a Friday afternoon – details about this can be found in the parent guide.

I have also included below some useful reading which I have been passed on by a fellow headteacher. Please take from it anything you feel would be helpful in discussing everything with your child(ren).

Next week is half term and we will be taking this as a half term break to give all staff, parents and children a break from school at home work. However, should you need to contact me, particularly following the information going out today, I will still be available by email in the first instance or to speak on the phone if you need, so please don't hesitate to get in touch. When an announcement is made regarding 1st June I will be in touch again. Have a lovely week!

Kind regards,

Mary See

Mary See, Headteacher, Cheselbourne Village School



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From Mrs See – We will be guided by the below information in supporting children to prepare for and upon, their return. Going through the children’s guide together, which has photographs in it to help make it clearer, will hopefully support preparing for the changes but at the same time reassure with the familiarity of the school and the adults there that haven’t changed.

Finding Hope In The Familiar

This situation is new to all of us. In any transition, it’s important to start with the familiar. What is it that we do know? As parents, you may have learnt a lot about your child over the last few weeks. It may be helpful to write your thoughts down and share them with people in school. Asking the children about their experiences in lockdown is useful as well.

The Importance of a Transition Period

We don’t expect children to arrive on Day 1 and hit the ground running. School will be different. For children who struggle with change, it will difficult. We will not be able to simply pick up where we left off.

Considering The Child’s Lockdown Experience

Understanding and sharing your child’s experiences during lockdown will help the staff transition your child back into school. For example, some children may not have done any school work at home because of various reasons; home is home and school is school and they do not meet; some children, used to additional classroom support may have found it overwhelming and too stressful; some children will have enjoyed setting their own agenda and having more freedom. The connection between families and school, over the next weeks, is a great opportunity to strengthen co-production going forwards.

Communication Issues

Being at home and being at school is very different in terms of communication. Some children may have experienced different levels of communication within their own immediate family in a very quiet environment. Some children will have experienced communicating with family and friends in different ways through technology. Returning to a communication rich environment, such as school, will be another adjustment. There will be more adults and children around and it will be noisier. This may be more difficult for some than others. School will be very aware of this and again will do everything possible to support.

Social Interaction

From the start to the end of the day, the experience of getting involved again, will be another adjustment. Social interaction is different for every child and they deal with it in many different and sometimes complex ways. Phased, smaller classes may benefit this. Some children will come back and pick up friendships where they left off. For others, they may be worrying about forgetting how to interact. Some children will want to talk about their experiences amongst themselves during play. We need to be careful how some children fit



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into this as their experiences may have been different and sharing this information may be overwhelming or upsetting for some. As a school, we will be setting expectations of respecting each other through our usual values. There will be some social challenges on return and we want to reassure you that we are aware of this and are planning accordingly with ways to support the children.

Sensory Needs

We are also aware that some children will have experienced a significant shift within their sensory systems. They might be on heightened alert – more sensitive to noise, crowds, smells etc. Coming back to school for these children will be intense and overwhelming. They may have coped with their sensory needs at home through using headphones for online learning, having quiet space, lots of breaks and freedom. Others may have been upset by changes in routine and not being able to visit special places. It would be very useful for parents to share such information with the school to help us with our understanding. We are very mindful that sensory issues will be a big issue for some children.

Independence and Adapting to Change

Children can find it very difficult to process change. When school ended it was very sudden and it was a major change to life as we knew it. When we go back, it will be a further change and while some things will be familiar, there will be new ways of doing things that we will need to embed into our school day. We will communicate changes to routine and classrooms as early as possible prior to return so that your child has time to become familiar with the unfamiliar. We will use our web site (under the key information tab) and our Facebook page to post photos of the school, starting with what has stayed the same and introduce changes. We will give time to the children in the first week to practise the changes.

Emotional Support

Children may have experienced many emotions – joy of being at home, not getting up in the morning and putting uniform on or worrying about the virus. Children are vastly different in how they process their emotions. Some might find it difficult to recognise their emotions and what they are connected to which can cause distress. Some children feel emotion in a very big way and are hyper sensitive to the emotions around them so with all the emotion currently around, these children may have really struggled. Fear may also still be a factor for some time. We are very aware of the above and will be giving lots of time to allow children to communicate their emotions by listening, talking and giving them time to process what is happening.

