

New Forest Care Education

4th May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Firstly, I hope this letter finds you and your household safe and well. These are certainly unprecedented and unusual times for all of us; students, staff, parents/carers and our friends and families.

Secondly, I would like to thank all parents/carers for the kind words and messages that have been received via messages, emails and phone calls during this time.

I wanted to touch base with you all and give you an update on COVID-19 and the impact on New Forest School, including our plans moving forward.

We have managed to remain open throughout this difficult period, supporting the small number of students attending, thankfully with very minimal numbers of staff and no students falling ill.

The key to this being successful has been the range of measures introduced:

1. Class groups on site are locked down to a specific classroom, specific set of staff who only work with that class, different entrance/exit to the school and separate toilet facilities.
2. Start and finish times for the students who are attending are staggered with a shortened overall day so students/staff from different class groups do not meet in school or outside in the car parks.
3. Reduced days of attendance for specific class groups to reduce number of students/staff on site on any given day.
4. Strict social distancing during the day, no use of shared facilities and enhanced daily cleaning regimes.
5. Alternative curriculum/timetable – staff with class groups are supporting work from our VLE and interspersing with fun classroom activities.

Meanwhile, another dedicated team of staff have been working from home supporting the provision of work on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), communicating with parents/carers and students whilst also supporting those staff who are attending school sites.

I would like to publicly thank my entire staff team for their enthusiasm and effort in ensuring our students are supported in difficult circumstances. They have been simply

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wonderful and I am incredibly proud of what they have done and continue to do for the school.

I would also like to thank you as parents/carers for supporting the school, doing an amazing job of supporting the home schooling, communicating so well with staff and making sensible decisions around your child's attendance. We would certainly not have been able to maintain this level of safety for students and staff without your support following government guidance and keeping your children at home where ever safe and possible to do so.

Looking to the future, it was always our plan to review our current situation this week, in line with the Government's next three weekly review of the Lockdown and any updated guidance for schools from this.

Now we seem to be passing the peak of the pandemic, our provisional plan is currently to look at some form of wider opening of the school after half term (1st June) to give us time to plan properly and ensure we are able to do this in as safe a way as possible. We now know that the Government plan to publish a 'roadmap' of how to ease the country out of lockdown on Sunday this week (10th April). We will of course be studying this closely and any associated guidance that is released regarding education and schools.

Therefore, it is our intention to make contact with all parents/carers individually on Monday of next week with more details of our next steps and to discuss our plan going forward.

I think I speak for all staff at New Forest School when I say we are desperate to have things back to normal and have all staff and students on site. However, we will continue to make safe and sensible decisions regarding how best to operate as a school as I am sure our parents/carers will also be doing regarding their own child's attendance/schooling.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if we can be of any further support at this time, either via your child's tutor during their regular phone calls or by calling/emailing the school.

Kind regards,



Duncan Smith
Headteacher