



# Ox Close Federation Newsletter

June 5<sup>th</sup> 2020



## **Wider re-opening of schools**

There has been much in the news over the past 6 weeks with regard to the wider re-opening of schools. As you know, we have consulted with parents and have a robust plan and risk assessment in place for a prospective wider re-opening. I am very confident in the organisation that we have in place within school and feel that the risks to children and staff would be minimised. However, we have no control over Public Health matters and we are continuing to follow the vast swathes of Government advice, follow the scientific debate and Durham County Council advice, after all the Local Authority has access to a whole host of information that schools do not possess. It goes without saying that ensuring safety is our priority. No organisation can absolutely guarantee that the infection will not occur within their premises and schools are no different, all schools have a community context. At present, we are focussed upon wider re-opening on June 15<sup>th</sup> but this date is dependent upon advice and circumstances, as I am sure everyone understands.

## **Parental Choice**

We respect the rights of parents in the eligible year groups, Reception, Nursery, Year 1 and Year 6, to make the choice of whether to send their child to school during this crisis. Parents must do what they consider what is right for their child and this is something which is difficult for all of us who are affected. The media is awash with news about the crisis and Government guidance is constantly changing. Last week, there were 41 updates in guidance which affects us in school and it can be overwhelming. We also understand that parents can change their mind. This morning, we sent text message out to parents of children in the eligible year groups and asked them to let us know if they have changed their mind. This will allow us to keep our planning and risk assessments up to date.

## **Changing Advice**

One example of where Government advice has changed is in relation to the clinically vulnerable. This link has been withdrawn:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>

and been replaced by:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

This Government has also been updated for parents:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers?utm\\_source=7be2ad88-13fc-4aad-b39d-](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers?utm_source=7be2ad88-13fc-4aad-b39d-36545b596d17&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

[36545b596d17&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers?utm_source=7be2ad88-13fc-4aad-b39d-36545b596d17&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

I must stress again that whatever the guidance or advice from the Government or any other source, the choice remains with parents as whether to send children at this time.

## **Planning for the Future**

We continue to try to plan for the future but at this moment it is impossible to predict what the situation will be in 2 weeks, let alone in the new academic year. Classes and staffing will be organised and we are busy finalising this now. However, the way that we organise will depend upon the context at the time and the relevant guidance, which as can be seen above, is changing on a daily basis. It seems that there is pressure in many quarters to reduce the 2m rule, which would affect all organisations. I would say that there is no prospect of all pupils being in school full time in September. There needs to be an acceptance that all professions will adapt to change, the virus will be around for some time. In Scotland, pupils will take part in blended learning, which will mean direct teaching in school for part of the week, online lessons (via Teams etc) and directed tasks. I would forecast that similar arrangements may be necessary in England but, as we have seen continually, England does not always follow what the rest of the world is doing. This uncertainty is challenging for everyone, especially parents. We will continue to communicate with you and keep you up to speed as soon as there are any developments.

**Ox Close Podcast**

The next edition of the Ox Close Podcast will go out on Tuesday at 10am. This week we are looking for nominations of children who have learned a new skill, shown determination and perseverance and have shown kindness. Please email [nominations@durhamlearning.net](mailto:nominations@durhamlearning.net) by Sunday at 5pm if you would like to nominate your child. Thank you.

**Hall of Fame**

If your child wins an award then we have a Hall of Fame section on both Facebook pages and please do post pictures of the children with their certificates and or awards, if you can. It is great to celebrate and to spread the good word.

**Online Learning**

We are always seeking to improve our offer to the children and parents. Our online learning has been well received and rightly so. This will continue. In addition, we have started some trials where we can develop interaction between the staff and children and offer some teaching input. Via Microsoft Teams Learning is not just about content. Another advantage of this is that it enables pupils to see each other on screen. Of course, it is a complicated process which requires permissions and safeguards, which is why we are only trialling with small numbers initially. So far, we have looked at a small number of Year 5s. This will continue and we will also be trying with Year 4s. I would like all Key Stage 2 children to have this opportunity regularly before the end of this academic year. In addition, we are exploring ways of providing 'Show and Tell' sessions for younger ones, potentially through outlets such as Zoom. I am keen to progress this as I have been planning it for months! We will keep you posted!

**Stay Safe**

Our next scheduled newsletter is due out on June 19<sup>th</sup> 2020. Until then, stay safe and take care.

*D Harrison*

Mr D Harrison  
Executive Headteacher