Philip White
Cabinet Member for Learning and Employability
Councillor for Dove Division
2 Staffordshire Place
Tipping Street, Stafford ST16 2DH

Website: www.staffordshire.gov.uk

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Dear Parent / Carer

Wider opening of schools – open letter to parents and carers

This month, all schools in Staffordshire opened to even more pupils. Every headteacher has put in place arrangements for their own school that ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children and staff. We are grateful for the work that school leaders, teachers and support staff are doing, in these challenging times, to support all children in school and those continuing with home learning.

We also want to thank parents and carers for the support they are giving to their schools and the positive response to the wider opening. This shows parental confidence in the measures that each school is taking to keep children safe.

Each school is different, meaning they all have different approaches to how social distancing can work for the size and layout of their school. Government guidance to schools is that children with a social worker or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) should attend school, where appropriate. The guidance also provides flexibility for schools to welcome back more children from more year groups but **the positive response from parents in the nursery, reception, years 1 and 6 means that almost all schools are currently full**.

Our advice is to check what the situation is at your local school but please understand that they may already have as many children attending as possible. Where children are not attending school, we are asking parents to encourage and enable home learning through the support the school is providing.

Teachers are working hard to help children observe social distancing guidelines and ensure they are complying with government guidance while they are in school. For now, the current social distancing arrangements will continue to remain the same until the end of

summer term. Parents can help with this by reinforcing social distancing measures at home. This will be a great help to teachers.

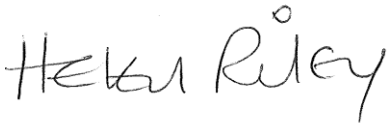
If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) then you should liaise with your school SENCO to look at carrying out a risk assessment. This will help with any decisions regarding your child, particularly whether they will stay at home with access to remote learning, or whether a plan can be created for them to return to school.

We are all waiting for new government guidance for the opening of schools in September. Whatever that guidance contains, school leaders will be doing their very best over the next two months to ensure that it can be implemented safely in their own setting. However, circumstances may change nationally or locally during that period, and it is important to understand that plans which are in place at the end of term may have to be amended over the holiday, although clearly, we hope that will not be necessary.

Once again, thank you for your understanding and for working with your school, whether your child is attending or continuing their home learning with your support.

Yours faithfully





Philip White
Cabinet Member for Learning & Employability
Councillor for Dove Division

Helen Riley
Deputy Chief Executive and
Director for Families & Communities