

Dear Parent and Carers

It is important for me to keep you all up to date with developments as we make plans towards providing a provision which allows parents of identified groups of pupils to get back to work, whilst minimising risk as much as is humanly possible, to our pupils, staff and community.

We have made contact with all of our families of pupils who are classed as vulnerable or with EHCP's, all of our families who are classed as having a critical worker and all of our FS1 families. Thank you all for engaging with this first step, by the deadline of Wednesday 20th May in a highly cooperative and understanding fashion. I have to be honest, I knew we had a lot of critical workers in our community, but I have been overwhelmed by the numbers who need a place.

This has meant a few things are clear already.

For the time being, we are certainly unable to offer places to those families whose parents/carers are not critical workers. This means we will NOT be contacting any other year groups about a return to school until the Government adapts its rules and deems it safe to do so.

I can only apologise and empathise with those of you with children from FS1, FS2, Year 1 and Year 6 who were hoping beyond hope that a place may be available. It does at least help you as families to be able to discuss work arrangements with your employers in good time and I am also sure you are with us in understanding the complexity of the situation too.

Wednesday and Thursday have been spent analysing my workforce availability and trying to draft groupings of children to maximise the number of spaces we can accommodate whilst following all the Government guidance and rafts of safe working procedures.

I have to say at this stage, we have not managed this successfully yet after several drafts.

It is not so much the space in school that is the challenge, it is the staffing levels and safety measures that are limiting.

The groups of children will form what we are calling 'bubbles' in different class bases around school and will have adults to lead them through the week. These bubbles of pupils and staff are to try wherever possible, not to mix with each other throughout the day and we cannot move staff or pupils from one bubble to another unless that person has socially distanced for a week. Those of you who have keenly followed the Government guidance documents [here](#) will understand the safety reasons behind this. This ties staff, whether part time or full time to one particular bubble and in effect reduces staff capacity considerably. I am also desperately trying to create time in the week for my class teachers and wellbeing team to be able to run our home learning programmes for the vast majority of our pupils who will remain at home. We believe passionately that we want this to continue, and I am sure as a community you wholeheartedly support us in this. We felt quite distressed that the Government, whilst talking about education being so important, effectively said that years 2 to 5 could have much less home learning support and that a link to an education website or two would suffice. As we now know at RWPA this involves many children from FS 1 right through to Year 6. I think it goes without saying that if I employ every member of staff available to man the daytime provision, then this home provision will inevitably have to downsize.

There are 2 more things that are clear at this point.

1. Our catering staff are, quite rightly for health reasons, at a very low capacity. This means there will definitely be no hot dinners. We are currently working out how we can provide packed lunches for those who need or are entitled to them.
2. We will be unable to run an early start provision or an after school provision. There are currently up to 70 families who have requested this. There is no possible way of avoiding bubble group mixing and having additional staff who are not already attached to groups run the provision.

There may be some of our critical worker families who read this and think 'I could actually manage without the provision.' I say this not flippantly, but as one that knows that even reducing our numbers by 10 or so pupils could make a significant difference to what we can provide.

If you are from a critical worker family and that feel that you would be in a position to do this, please give our team a ring today on [01904 555160](tel:01904555160) or send an email to [admin.rws@ebor.academy](mailto:admin.rws@ebor.academy)

As always, it is very important for us to be open and honest and share what we know so far and this update has been a warts and all update of the progress made so far and it is back to the drawing board today, with planning for a safe provision firmly in mind.

I hope this has been useful, have a lovely bank holiday weekend and thank you once again for your understanding.

Kind regards

Chris Evans