

Thursday, May 21, 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are safe and well and have enjoyed the warm weather this week. This is our weekly communication. I have split this into two sections as there is some very specific information for students in Nursery, Reception, Year 1, Year 6 and Year 10. This is contained at the bottom of the letter. The information for parents in other year groups is at the top of the letter.

School Opening for children of key workers and vulnerable students

School remains open during half term (Tuesday-Friday) for children of key workers and vulnerable students (i.e. those with a social worker). Parents of key workers who need support on Bank Holiday Monday should make contact with the local authority.

Free School Meal collection

Free school meal collection continues as per the information on the website.

Online Safety

With an increase in the use of online resources, online safety is a big concern for many parents. Advice is included on the academy website to support parents. I would ask parents to ensure they are actively monitoring their child's use of the internet as we have been made aware of reports of some networks operating that are encouraging children into risky online behaviour using certain adult sites (Only Fans and My Fan). These reports are at a national level and are not directly related to Unity Academy.

Children in Years 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9

At this present time we have no date or information from the Government as to when these year groups might return to school. It is for this reason that post half term, we will be putting in place some additional contact with students and parents of children in these year groups to see how we can best support remote learning. We will be looking to release additional material (including video tutorials) after half term to specifically support children in these year groups.

Nursery, Reception, Year 1, Year 6 and Year 10

Thank you for being so patient with us as we have taken the time needed to carefully plan our phased return of children to school. No doubt you will have seen some of the local and national press coverage on this issue and of the concerns raised by various groups, but also of the strong sense of support for children returning to schools in a phased and safe way.

Much detailed discussion has taken place in recent days and I wanted to clarify our decisions to you. This decision has been taken with the support of FCAT (Fylde Coast Academy Trust) and has been taken with the safety of children and staff in mind. We will begin to open more widely for certain groups of children from the week beginning the 8th June.

The government's ambition of June 1st has proved to be too soon for us to make all the necessary arrangements and to consult on and complete all the required Health and Safety risk assessments. I am not prepared to open until it is safe to do so and we will need until the 8th June to ensure the environment is safe for students to return. Although frustrating, I hope parents can understand that the delay is to ensure the safety of any children returning to school.

Importantly, we do not feel at this stage that we can safely manage the return of nursery and reception age children. The social distancing arrangements are extremely challenging and we require more time to devise effective approaches to these particular year groups. It remains our intention to reopen to these groups but we need to establish routines with children and parents of children in Year 1, Year 6 and Year 10 first. Once we are sure that we can provide a safe environment for children in reception we will inform parents. At present staffing factors mean it is unlikely that we will be able to open nursery more widely for some weeks.

In the week beginning June 8th 2020, our academy will open for Years 1, 6 and 10 only as well as children of key workers and vulnerable children. We will be phasing in children throughout that week and the Monday will be handed over to essential staff training. From Tuesday 9th June children will return initially to be trained on social distancing and necessary hygiene practices and measures within the classroom and wider school setting. Specific and highly detailed advice, including some 'walk through' videos will be published in the week beginning June 1st. Specific entrances and exits will be used for each year group and a queueing system will operate for drop off and pick up. Drop off and start times will be staggered. We will also provide details about behaviour expectations and provide you with a guide to explaining this to your children.

It is our intention at this stage to offer 'full time' provision for Year 1 and Year 6 from Tuesday 9th June and 2-3 hours of face to face contact per day for Year 10. Full details will be provided to these year groups in the week beginning June 1st. This will include start and end times for your child.

Irrespective of year group our approach will be to work with your child/children in 'bubbles'. These will be defined groups that will not change and will have the same attached staff. This will help secure a COVID safe learning environment. Again, more details on all the above will follow in the week after half term. You may want to begin to explain to your child that when they return, they will not be able to mix with all of their friends and all lessons, breaks and movement will be with the children and staff within their bubble.

It is also important to stress that the current provision for vulnerable children and children of key workers will continue as it has operated so far and is unaffected by these additional plans.

Student Attendance

I am aware that some parents do not intend to allow their children in the year groups above to return to school at this time. No fines will be issued for non-attendance at this time. In order to support us with staffing and planning the bubbles I would ask all parents of children in Years 1, 6 and 10 to complete the Google Form on the website to confirm their intentions. Please complete this by **Monday 1st June, 10AM.** We will follow up responses with a phone call on the 2nd or 3rd June.

Thank you once again for your support at this time, if you have any queries which are not covered by this letter, drop us an email on generalenquiries@unity.fcat.org.uk and we will respond.

Yours sincerely,



Mr S Cooke
Headteacher