Thursday, 21st May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

**Starting the Phased Reopening of Schools**

You will be aware from the news that the Government has announced the phased reopening for schools from Monday, 1st June 2020. In Sandwell, schools have been looking at how this will be achieved to agree a common approach. Schools have reviewed the requirements for social distancing, hygiene and the daily cleaning requirement, as well as organisational changes that may need to be made to the school day to enable schools to open.

In Special schools, unlike in mainstream schools, the government has not recommended specific year groups to return first. Sandwell has therefore asked Special School Headteachers to continue to prioritise the children/young people to attend school in the following order.

* Vulnerable children (based on a risk assessment of their needs)
* Key Worker Children
* Children due to make a key transition in September (i.e. Yr.6 moving to another school/site)
* Children who can safely have their needs met in educational provision

Due to classroom space, dining facilities, toilet options, potential behavioural flash points, changes to family circumstances and specialist staff available in each school, we will need to build up our numbers slowly to ensure that the safety measures we have put in place to date continue to be as robust.

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**Our phased reintegration plan is as follows:**

From the 1st of June 2020 we will:

* Continue to operate from the Shenstone Lodge site
* Continue to offer places to our most vulnerable children, as family circumstances have changed during ‘lockdown’ this number is increasing.
* Continue to offer places to key worker children
* School hours will remain from 10.00am -1.00pm to support transport capacity across all special schools

**Assuming there are no further lockdown directives**

From the 29th June 2020 it is planned to:

* Open both school sites
* Schools will continue to support most our vulnerable and keyworker children on the site they would normally attend
* Shenstone Lodge students in Y6 and Y7 students that are due to transition to The Brades Lodge will begin to attend The Brades Lodge
* Y10 students will begin to be invited into The Brades Lodge for face to face meetings

Whilst the Government is encouraging families to take up the places offered by schools, we are aware that some children have medical conditions that make them more clinically vulnerable and are possibly shielding, as a result they should not be in school. In addition, you may feel unhappy at this point in time to send your child back into school until the National levels of Covid-19 decreases further.

If you choose to keep your child(ren) at home you will not be penalised for doing so at this time. Schools will make every effort to keep children in a safe environment, following government guidance. However, I need to be clear that schools cannot guarantee there will be no transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

We have included a frequently asked questions sheet with this letter to help you understand the position from 1st June.

Yours sincerely



Neil Toplass

Shenstone Lodge School