

2nd June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you had a good 'half term' break and that you are all safe and well.

Thank you very much to all of you who took part in our online survey at the end of last term; it was a very helpful way for us to gauge your views and incorporate them into our planning for Term 6.

Parents from all year groups and all sites took part.

The main findings were:

- 60% of you said you would prefer your child to stay at home during Term 6
- 32% of you said you would be happy to send your child back to school as you felt there would be minimum risk.
- 96% of you said your child had been observing social distancing rules whilst at home
- 43% of you said you wanted your child to be transported in a large vehicle.
- 30% of you said your child would not manage social distancing in school
- 28% of you said your child would not cope with being taught predominantly in one room.

Many of you wrote additional comments that explained your thinking in full. For example: some of you with Year 11 children, who might have liked to have returned, felt that younger children should be prioritised for a space; some of you felt your child would not cope with being at the Great Chart site; one or two of you mentioned your concerns for your child's mental health whilst at home and some of you felt the different way of running the day would cause too much anxiety for your child.

We have taken full account of your views from the survey and from the conversations you have been having with staff who ring and visit; we believe these views to be fairly representative of the whole Goldwyn parent and carer community.

You will probably be aware that guidance to schools (Primary, Secondary and Special Schools has also been updated. I have added links below for your information. We have used this information to start to put together our wider-reopening plan, Risk Assessments and staff and student guidance documents.

Supporting children and young people with SEND as schools and colleges prepare for wider opening

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance>

What parents and carers need to know about schools and other education settings during the coronavirus outbreak

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

Opening schools and educational settings to more pupils from 1 June: guidance for parents and carers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

As you will, see the guidance for special schools remains slightly different from mainstream schools as the age of the child is not a pre-determining factor.

“all schools and childcare providers to continue to offer places to the priority groups – vulnerable children and children of critical workers – they have been supporting since the end of March

special schools, special post-16 institutions and hospital schools to work towards a phased return of more children and young people without a focus on specific year groups and informed by risk assessments.” Opening schools and educational settings to more pupils from 1 June: guidance for parents and carers June 1st 2020

“Where the risk assessment determines a child or young person with an EHC plan will be safer at home, our recommendation is that they stay at home. Where the risk assessment determines a child or young person with an EHC plan will be as safe or safer at an education setting, our recommendation is that they attend the education setting.” What parents and carers need to know about schools and other education settings during the coronavirus outbreak – June 1st 2020

As you are aware, due to the limited number of teaching and support staff available to work, we have only been able to operate on one site since the 23rd March. Our current capacity is limited by the amount of space we have in school in general, our small classroom spaces, the number of staff we have available to work on site and the transport requirements of students, including only a very small number of large vehicles. We are also mindful that we must continue to provide a good level of pastoral support and home learning for the 60% of you who do not wish your child to be in school at this stage.

To summarise, I wanted to explain what we intend to happen from Monday 8th June (subject to all Risk Assessments being completed and met)

- Goldwyn Ashford (Great Chart Site) will open up 3 additional groups of students
- Additional Students will be prioritised on a basis of need.
- Students and parents/carers will need to agree the daily safety procedures and expectations prior to their child returning.
- Each group will be for 3 students only and will be from mixed classes and year groups. (Social compatibility will be assessed when deciding groups)
- Lessons will not be taught by subject specialist (secondary model) but by a team of 3 staff, dedicated to that “Unit Bubble”
- Some subject work will be accessed online whilst in the classroom.

How will we organise the school? :

- The “wider reopening” will be organised with students attending school for 2 days a week: either Monday & Tuesday or Wednesday & Thursday. This will enable us to see more students per week for face-to-face sessions.
- Within school, students will be split into “Unit Bubbles”
- Each Unit Bubble will have the same staff and student group. (3 students and 3 staff (2 staff in class at any one time)
- Students will stay in their Unit Bubble and will not mix with other students, even at break and lunch time.
- Students will be in the same room(s) each day, with the same staff team, the same group of children and the same equipment (each student to have own box file, stationary, etc)
- Student arrival and departure will be staggered and the day will run from 9am to 2.30pm in the first instance, with a shorter lunch time of 30 minutes
- Lunch will be a sandwich or roll and will be delivered to the Unit. Students may bring their own packed lunch and we encourage them to bring their own water bottle
- The only practical area, which we will use at the moment, will be the Cookery Room. This will be timetabled.
- Our extensive outside space will be used for break, walks and project work.

How else will we keep your child safe?

In addition to our usual safeguarding practices and the changes outlined above, we have introduced a number of other measures to keep all children and staff as safe as possible:

- Clear expectations about social distancing, following instructions and routines in order to keep everyone safe
- Regular hand washing Unit Bubbles all have hand washing facilities.
- Alcohol gel will be available as students arrive and depart school.
- Classroom furniture and equipment will be rearranged. Students will have identified working areas
- No sharing of basic equipment: each student will have their own box file and stationary
- Specific ‘Unit Bubbles’ where students will be and specific routes around the school.
- A toilet will be assigned to each Unit Bubble.
- Cleaning of surfaces, etc throughout the day in each unit by the unit staff and cleaning of all communal “touch” surfaces (door handles, etc) throughout the day by cleaning staff.
- All areas cleaned thoroughly each evening by cleaning staff.
- Units will have open windows for ventilation
- Students will be transported in single occupancy large vehicles (they will be required to use hand gel before getting into the vehicle) or by their parents.

My Senior Management Team and I have carried out a detailed analysis of all our students and prioritised a small number of additional students to bring into the Great Chart site over the next couple of weeks; you will have received a phone call if a place has been offered to your child. I am desperately sorry if this means disappointment for you and your child at this time, but I am sure you will understand why we are unable to offer places to all of you. I am longing for the time when we can welcome all of our children back to Goldwyn, but for everyone's safety this is not possible at the moment.

My aim is to be able to open Goldwyn Folkestone at the end of June if the situation improves and it is safe to do so. This will enable an increased number of children to attend both at the Great Chart and Folkestone sites.

I know that those of you who's children attend our Goldwyn Plus, Beaver Road, provision are only too aware of the tiny room spaces we have to work in and why we are unable to open this site safely at present.

We are currently undertaking a risk assessment of our Sixth Form College site and hope that we may be able to open for some face-to-face sessions this term.

If you are concerned about your child's emotional vulnerability at this time and you would like to seek additional support, please get in touch with your tutor/ keyworker or Centre Manager and we will do whatever we can to help; there are an ever increasing number of 'wider support services' opening up as the weeks go on. We will endeavour to keep our website updated with these, but if you would prefer a conversation about what would be most appropriate for your family circumstances, again please get in touch.

One of the additional resources mentioned by the DfE is the 'laptop scheme'. Monday's guidance states:

"There are two groups of children and young people eligible for a laptop or tablet who currently lack access. The first is care leavers and children who receive support from a social worker (including families with pre-school children with a social worker, as well as older children), who need to keep in touch with social care services. The second group are disadvantaged students who would not otherwise have access to online learning and are preparing for exams (in year 10)"

I heard this week that these laptops would be ordered by KCC shortly. At this stage we don't know how this resource will be rolled out or when eligible Year 10 students might receive them. I will let you know as soon as I hear anything further.

Our Examination Officers and Centre Managers are currently uploading Year 11 and some Year 13 examination grades onto the exam board websites. Results will be published on the 20th August for most qualifications, although we are still waiting for a precise date for some of our vocational qualifications. Unfortunately, your child will not be able to collect their results this year; we will post them to you by Recorded Delivery on the 20th. As I have mentioned before, we are unable to give you any information regarding the grades, which your child has been awarded, prior to this publication date.

This very difficult time continues for all of us and the situation for schools, over the next few weeks and months, is far from clear. As the lockdown eases for the public, the pressure to maintain safe social distancing in schools increases. As I hope you can see, we are working carefully to ensure any increase in student numbers is as risk free as possible. This obviously requires a lot of planning, whilst responding to ever changing stipulations and guidance. I also want to ensure that we continue to provide the best home learning and social, emotional support we can for our students who are not able to come to school yet. It is my hope that by getting things as safe and as supportive as they can be now, that we will have a model to draw on for September as the likelihood of a full return to normality is far from assured at this stage.

My best wishes to all of you

Charlotte Lewis