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St Benedict Biscop CE Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers

We hope you and your families are all well, we are missing you all.

Following the government announcement on Tuesday that they are no longer looking at opening school wider before the end of the academic year I wanted to update you about our current position. Like you, I was hopeful that there could be a plan which would enable us to offer teaching to all our children, face to face, before the summer holidays so I was disappointed at this announcement.

We have opened the school to the year groups identified by the government in a staged way since half term with strict social distancing measures in place and an increased focus on hygiene and cleaning. This seems to be working well and the children who are in school are adapting well.

I wrote to you before half term to request that you advise us if you are classed as a key worker and many of you did, thank you. Based on your responses I was also able to offer limited places to children whose parents were not key workers in nursery, reception, year 1 and year 6. Since half term many employers are asking parents to return to offices which has resulted in a number of enquiries about spaces in school from key worker families. We are now providing education and childcare support for over 100 children and have reached full capacity. While our group sizes are limited to a maximum of 15 with 2 metre social distancing we do not have the physical space in school to accommodate any more children. Even if the social distancing requirement were to reduce to 1 metre we would not be able to accommodate many additional children unless the group limit of 15 changes.

With this in mind we want to increase communication with the children who are not able to come into school physically. Our teachers have begun to make weekly phone calls to catch up with you and your child and to offer support with home learning. All of our teachers are in school full time and teaching a group of children for school hours but will continue to respond to emails and calls when they can. We are also setting up Class Dojo so that the children can communicate directly with their teacher and share work or photos from home, this should happen early next week. Transition to the next year group is also a priority so that the children who have been out of school since March can be introduced to the teachers they will meet when they do finally return to school. Hopefully the plans for September will be released soon so that we can let you know what to expect.

As always, the incredible responses we have received from parents has kept us going and made us smile. We have received letters and cards from the children in the post, videos of them working at home and lovely messages via email from lots of parents. Thank you for every one of these messages it makes a great difference.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you all, hopefully more normality will return to our lives soon.

Warm regards

Nicola Scott-Worthington

Headteacher

