



14th May, 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Planned reopening of schools to some year groups from 1st June

Thank you for your patience in waiting for me to get back to you following the government's latest announcement. You will have seen in the national news that schools plan to reopen in some form from 1st June to **nursery, reception (Foundation Stage), Year 1 and Year 6** pupils **if** the government thinks it is safe at that time.

The government has made it clear that these are **the only year groups** it plans to bring back to school at this time, regardless of the school system (i.e. 3 tier with transition points in Year 4 and Year 8). However, the government's ambition will be to bring back all primary aged children for at least some time before the summer holidays, again, as long as it is safe to do so. Ensuring your child has a successful transition to their next school remains a key priority for us. The local authority is also lobbying central government to see if bringing those year groups (Y4 and Y8) into school sooner is possible. I will keep you informed.

I know that it is a very unsettling time, but rest assured, we are doing everything we can to make sure it is calm and safe for school to reopen in the coming weeks. This includes working very closely with the DfE, the local authority, unions and FARM schools (Firs, Alameda, Russell and Maulden) to ensure safety, consistency and fairness for all our families and children.

The FARM schools are now at the stage of creating detailed plans that we will share with you next week, so you know what the school's reopening will look like in practice and how we plan to make it as safe as is possible for everyone. Thank you for bearing with us; we are being asked to do something that has never been done before and for which there is no blueprint.

Plans will include key changes:

- Limiting class sizes
- Staggering break times, and pick-up and drop-off times
- Changes to timetables
- Increased cleaning regimes

As with the government's 'tiny tweaks and ultimate caution' approach to coming out of lockdown, please do not expect that it will be 'normal' school if we are able to return from 1st June. We need to set up plans and timetables in order to accommodate everyone safely in much smaller classes, continue with key worker provision and ensure we can still expand to bring in more year groups in the near future.

Adam J.G Campbell (Headteacher)

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The government would like to strongly encourage parents of children in returning year groups (YN, YR, Y1, Y6) to send their children into school. Getting back to school in some form before the summer will enormously support children's mental well-being, social skills and academic progress. However, the government has made it clear that there will not be any penalties at this stage for non-attendance. For the time being, the school's usual attendance policy (including the use of fines) will not be used.

In the meantime, school is still open **only** for vulnerable pupils and the children of critical key workers. We know some employers will be encouraging you to return to work, but we are not currently in a position to extend places to other children until we receive further government guidance.

I would like to thank you for your continued support in helping your child learn from home, and for the creative ways you have all found to keep in touch with us – and each other. You have been truly remarkable!

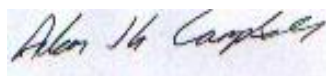
I will be in touch with you again next week, giving you more detailed information about what returning to school will 'look' like. I will also keep you updated when we know more about reopening for other year groups.

If your child is in one of the year groups that is not hoping to return to school from 1st June, we will continue to provide you with home learning, and free school meal support, for those eligible, in the usual way.

Thank you for your on-going patience and understanding. We are all together in this as a Firs community and we enormously value and appreciate your support at such a challenging time for everyone. If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch on 01525402735 or using the Office@Firslower.org address.

Stay safe and well everyone.

Many thanks and kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Adam Campbell', on a light blue background.

Adam Campbell
Headteacher