



1<sup>st</sup> June, 2020

Dear Parents / carers

### **Delay in Wider Opening for Saplings, Year R and Year 1 Children**

You will be aware that we were planning the wider reopening of the school to Saplings, Pine and Year 1 children, starting with Year 1 and Year R children on Wednesday 3rd June.

After reflecting on the latest scientific evidence presented by the government, the independent SAGE Group released on 28th May and considering the current delays to school opening occurring in many Bedford schools, we decided we should urgently review our plans.

**We have decided to delay the wider re-opening to Monday 15th June for YR and Y1 and 'from Monday 15th June' for the older Saplings children (starting YR in September).** We will continue to make provision for Key Worker children during the two weeks before this, as we were doing before half term.

We have considered the widest range of evidence we can, to inform our decision, including:

- Statements by the Independent SAGE Group, including that a delay of two weeks will reduce the risk of children contracting the virus by 50%
- The fact that the Reproduction (R) number remains at a level very close to one, which means that the risk of infection is still high.
- The Test and Trace system, introduced last week, has not been fully implemented.

This decision has not been taken lightly and we are very conscious about how important it is to return children to school.

**At The Firs we pride ourselves about being 'different' in that we are a very caring school and value the safety and well being of all our children, parents and staff, above everything else.**

I apologise for the late notification about this news but this is such a fluid situation that is changing so rapidly. I also realise that this decision will cause great disruption to some of your lives, especially if you were making plans to go back to work. I really regret any difficulties this causes but in the end, after a lengthy meeting, in which we tried to balance all the factors, we were guided by our values and principles, in arriving at a decision that safeguards the health and wellbeing of our Firs community and puts safety first.

We are not cancelling the wider opening of The Firs, we are postponing it. All staff will now be working on site and we will continue with our home learning provision. We are all greatly looking forward to welcoming our older Saplings, YR and Y1 children back to school from the 15th June.

Adam J.G Campbell (Headteacher)

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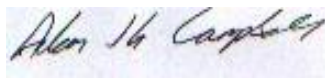
All the organisational details that have already been shared with you remain unchanged and I will write to YR, Y1 and Saplings parents nearer the time, with the information regarding the groups children are in and more details regarding the arrangements for the 15th.

As we all know, this situation is like nothing we have all dealt with before and we are all trying our best to see our way through what is a highly complex, rapidly developing and challenging situation.

We have been very struck by the support and kind messages we have received from many of you and I hope you will see that we are, as ever, trying to choose what we feel is the best and safest option for our community.

Thank you, as always, for your understanding and support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Adam J G Campbell", on a light blue background.

Adam J G Campbell  
Headteacher