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11<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers and Staff,

We are sure you saw the Prime Minister's speech last night. It appears as if, subject to certain conditions being met, Schools may be asked by the Government to 're-open in stages', from 1<sup>st</sup> June, beginning with Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils; the Government's ambition is also to give secondary pupils completing exams next year "at least some time with their teachers" before the summer holidays.

In response to this we have the following to share with you. We have extensive, combined School leadership experience, and the privileged responsibility of looking after incredible children, as well as leading an amazing group of dedicated staff and an entire community. This has taught us two things; firstly to be truthful and secondly when it comes to children, young people and staff, to try to consider all possibilities.

As you are aware, during the Covid-19 lockdown, we have remained open for those pupils who have needed to be in School, whilst also doing our utmost to support the families of pupils who have remained at home.

We have not yet received any communication from the government outlining how their plans will be safely implemented.

As an all age Special School, our classes are based upon 'learning needs' and it would be extremely challenging for us to match suitably experienced staff to only age related cohorts of learners. Having to prioritise chronological year groups would also mean that we would simply not be able to offer a service to all the other pupils that we accommodate between the ages of 4 – 19.

In our setting, we need to consider developmental rather than age related differences in children's ability to understand and comply with social distancing; in reality, at FAW, there is no such thing as social distancing, given the particular needs of our pupils.

We will therefore continue to:

- Work with the Local Authority, Social Services and parents to support appropriate cohorts of pupils who are safer attending school / remaining at home
- Assess staff availability, staff requirements and staff support / wellbeing needs
- Assess the capacity of our building(s) and make appropriate adjustments

However, there is no doubt, that whatever measures are put in place, we cannot eliminate the risk that illnesses spread in a school due to the fact that we are all in close contact with each other. Pupil and staff safety will therefore steer our decision making.

Do we want the staff and the children back; of course. We are constantly reviewing our practice to see if we can make things safer, but as soon as we increase the numbers of pupils coming into school, the risk will increase.

We are simply not going to rush into making decisions which we may later regret.

Families and staff will shortly be receiving an electronic survey for us to better understand your needs, which we will use to help plan our future provision. Please complete this, as your cooperation and support is truly valued.

Take care all.

Kind regards

**The Senior Leadership Team**

