



Dear parents/carers,

### **Update on possible extension to schooling provision at Longwill 22.05.20**

Earlier this month the government set out plans for schools in England to start reopening to more pupils from the start of June. A couple of days ago, I uploaded a letter to parents and carers from the City Council Lead, Ian Ward and he affirmed that “Birmingham City Council is committed to working with schools, parents and unions to ensure that any such move is done in a safe way that gives confidence and reassurance. We are clear though that we only support Birmingham schools opening to more pupils when it is safe to do so”.

Also, the headteachers in all the special schools in the city have come together to produce a set of principles which will help us plan a ‘roadmap’ to extending schooling provision. I would like to reiterate that our most important consideration is that any extension is as safe as we can make it for children, families and staff. Any return or extension to schooling will be based upon our school risk assessment and the increasing amount of government guidance and information. As we know more, our risk assessment will evolve and change over time.

Last week, we asked you for your views and you have told us about your needs and wishes about any possible school attendance. About 30% of families want or need this type of provision.

Currently, our detailed plan will make sure we can safely welcome small groups of children back. Our priority is to do this as safely as possible, so please be aware that we may not be able to meet parental demand for places initially. We aim to build this carefully over time.

Special schools are not expanding provision in the same way as mainstream expectations. We intend to provide 3 or 4 ‘bubbles’ of pupils of a similar age groups (mixed years). We will assign staff to these ‘bubbles’ and they will work with the children on a fortnightly rota, maintaining continuity for the children. Because of the need to socially distance and maintain the safest environment we can, we cannot yet offer 5 days ‘school based provision’. We anticipate offering each ‘bubble’ of children 2 days each week. These groups are likely to stay small and will grow over time. We will start this when we have everything we need in place (but will not be before 08.06.20 at the very earliest, as with all Birmingham special schools). Also, please be aware that transport is only able to transport children in line with social distancing and thus their capacity will be stretched.

The only fulltime provision will be for vulnerable children with social workers and children of key workers who are working fulltime, as well as a very small group of children, which the school has identified as additionally vulnerable.

We will encourage children to maintain social distancing as much as possible and there will be some new routines for children to learn in terms of hygiene, handwashing and social distancing. Precautions we will be taking include:

- Limiting class sizes (based upon how many children we can have in a class whilst socially distancing)
- ‘Bubbles’ of children will learn, play and eat together and we will try to reduce mixing between groups of staff and pupils
- Increased cleaning before, during and after school
- Keeping pupils and staff with coronavirus symptoms at home

If your child is clinically extremely vulnerable, or living with someone who is in this group, they should not come back to school and should continue home learning. If your child is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), you should follow medical advice to decide if they should come back to school.

I want to reassure you again that we will not pressure parents to send their children to school – you know what is best for your child's health and wellbeing. We will provide you with more details on the arrangements for reopening in the coming weeks, so you can make the appropriate decision.

For pupils at home, we will continue to support you and your child with home learning, and meal support for those eligible. Please be reminded that in the meantime, the school is still open **only** for vulnerable pupils and the children of critical workers. Until we are told it's safe to do so, we are unable to provide places for other children.

We will keep you updated once we know more about when the school will be able to reopen, based on our school risk assessment and government, DFE and health guidance. This will be during the week beginning 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020.

The school will be physically closed during half term as building work is needed. I will check the school text line everyday in case any of you need to contact school for any reason. Also, if needed, you can contact me via email: [a.carter@longwill.bham.sch.uk](mailto:a.carter@longwill.bham.sch.uk)

If you have any questions, please do talk to your class teacher or myself.

Warm regards,

Elise Carter.