



# Highfields Academy

*Together we inspire, always aiming higher*

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Good morning everyone,

I hope you are all ok and keeping well. First of all I would like to thank the many of you who have responded to my request for information yesterday. I apologise for not responding to each one of these individually, there would not be enough hours in the day. I decided that the best approach would be to send a standard confirmation email to you to acknowledge your email and then begin to address your points through these daily letters.

If you haven't yet responded to me please do, your views are very important to us.

Many of the points that I received yesterday were things that we have already included in our draft risk assessment but there were several things mentioned that have been added to it. 250+ brains are far better than a few, so thank you again for this.

There are a few things that I would like to clarify and then a couple of points raised that I will respond to today. My game plan is to have a detailed risk assessment ready to go to the Board with by Wednesday next week and then to publish this to you by the end of next week/very early the following week so that you can see this at least a week before the 1<sup>st</sup> June.

- I asked whether you would be sending your children back into school on the 1<sup>st</sup> June. This was simply to try and gauge what the feeling is of parents. It is certainly not a commitment. In order to plan effectively I need to have a rough idea of numbers (100%, 50%, less?). I completely understand that your views may well change between now and the 1<sup>st</sup> June, the way things are they may change by tomorrow!
- Some parents have asked whether the current provision for Key Workers will continue once we have 3 year groups back in. This is one of the few things that I can give a definite answer on today. **Yes.** These pupils are our first priority group and this provision will be maintained.
- If a key worker child is in reception, Y1 or Y6 will they return to their class or stay in the key worker group? Current thinking is that they will return to their main class but we need to consider how this will work with before/after school provision.
- Will Kidspace only be available to Key worker children? Current thinking is yes.
- If classes are split into 2 halves of 15 how will this be decided? Will it be on ability? **Definitely not.** This is yet to be decided but one parent made a great suggestion regarding Y6 about grouping them depending on which high school they are attending. Luckily the split this year is 15/15 to Malbank and Brine Leas so this is likely to be the way we do it – thank you, a good idea.

There were lots of other questions around organisation, lunches, cleaning, start/finish times, health and safety, cleaning, social distancing. These will all be answered in the coming days.

I know many of you are concerned and we have had phone calls asking what our plans are. I do understand your anxieties but please, at this stage, be patient with us. My daily letters will continue and I promise to provide you with all information as soon as possible.

You will have heard on the news that there is clearly a difference of opinion between the government and the teaching trade unions about schools reopening on the 1<sup>st</sup> June. There were understandably differences of opinions between parents too.

I can only really comment on what my trade union (NAHT) are doing to support us. I have to say I have been very impressed. This morning our branch leader was on BBC, you may have seen it. Last week (8<sup>th</sup> May) a video conference was held and the majority of it was led by a consultant doctor. It was recorded and is available on Youtube. All staff here have been told that they must watch it. I looked this morning and it has had over 20,000 views. It is aimed at school leaders but it may be of interest to you and is publicly available. It's probably the most useful thing I have seen. The link is [https://youtu.be/K2bEm\\_NvIpc](https://youtu.be/K2bEm_NvIpc).

Finally I would like to clarify the schools' current intention. We do plan to open to reception, y1, Y6 and key worker children on June 1<sup>st</sup> and we are working incredibly hard to prepare for this. The government have set the date of June 1<sup>st</sup> **at the earliest**. This will be dependent on whether the 5 test measures that the government have set are being achieved, and I also expect that over the next few days we will hear more on the news as the government and teaching unions engage.

I know that this letter still leaves many unanswered questions but hopefully it addresses some of your points.

Please keep sharing your views with me. Also, please keep sending me emails regarding the answers to daily challenges or other work that your children are doing. I can't promise to respond quickly to all of these but I will definitely respond.

A huge thank you for your continued support,

Simon Dyson  
Principal.