

**Headteacher:  
Mrs M Davis**

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18<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parent / Carer,

### **School Update 18th May 2020**

Well done on your continuing great resilience, flexibility and adaptability in coping with such a difficult ongoing situation.

You will be aware of the broadcast from the Prime Minister which has been followed by a range of documents and guidance from the government regarding schools returning. I have not written to you before because we have been waiting for all of the guidance; we are still waiting for more of it to come in. What I can promise though is that we will do what is safest for all members of the community; we will continue to do our very best and this will take time to work through.

Currently, there are only a limited number of students attending school on a mostly part-time rotated basis, dependent on risk assessment and need. We do not anticipate any big change to the off-site or on-site provisions that we currently have in place and additional young people will not be expected back in school on the 1st June. We are working with families to support everyone in the best way possible. We continue to review each student on a case-by-case basis weekly.

There are many issues we need to work through and resolve before any next steps can be taken. These include, but are not limited to, the following and I recognise this is evolving all the time;

#### **Issues:**

- The need for clinically vulnerable people to stay at home remains
- The need for everyone to socially distance remains the case
- Social restrictions to see your friends and family remain in place
- The school has a number of staff who are unable to work for 12 weeks and beyond due to their underlying medical conditions
- Cornfield has lots of students and staff who have to work in a small area.
- Some of our young people cannot socially distance.
- Any changes need to be small and gradual.
- We need to have a guaranteed supply chain for cleaning materials and resources that students will need.
- Ensure transport is managed in regard to social distancing
- Space in classrooms; if we want to try and maintain social distance would mean no classroom can have more than 3 or 4 students in it (they really are that small) and this is on the assumption they do not leave that classroom during the day.
- Guidance states that students should not mix with other groups of students in the day meaning staggered lunch and break times and our building layout makes this very difficult.

#### **Special School Guidance**

**To support the above, guidance has been issued by the DfE, West Sussex County Council, the professional associations and local NHS services.**

Within the guidance there are areas of specific Special School Guidance about the next stage. This says we should “work towards a phased return of more children.... Without a focus on specific year groups”. The planned year groups announced by the government coming into schools does not

apply in special schools and it is for me to decide how and if we expand the number of students in school based upon consultation, guidance and risk assessments which must place the safety of all as the primary issue.

Free School Meals (FSM): we will continue to drop off supplies where appropriate and use the visit as an opportunity to speak to students and support in any way we can. We have been unable to access the FSM Edenred national voucher system which has been unreliable for many schools; at least with the supplies families are receiving FSM equivalents.

Leavers in Year 11: I am anticipating that we will see them all for a possible 2 – 4 day period during the next half term to both ensure all transition preparation for college is completed, some outstanding work is finished and to give the boys an opportunity to say farewell to Cornfield. I will be contacting parents and students individually.

Apart from FSM deliveries and visits next Tues (26<sup>th</sup>), the school will be closed for half term to allow for essential premises work to be carried out whilst the school is clear of students and staff.

I will be speaking to all parents over the next 2 weeks regarding the school's plan for next term but also and most importantly leading into September. These are difficult and anxious times for us all and I thank you for your continued patience as we try and navigate a way forward.

Please do look at the school website at some of the positive work students have completed. Congratulations to all the boys who participated in the West Sussex virtual games – Cornfield was first in the county in the last round – well done!

Thank you for your continued support of the school community and the ways in which you have been creative with your families at home. Please continue to stay safe. Everything we are doing is with the safety of all in mind.

Yours sincerely,



**Mrs M Davis**  
**Headteacher**

If any of this information is not clear please telephone the school on 01903 731277 where someone will explain it to you

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Cornfield School is part of the Federation of Special Schools comprising Cornfield, Oak Grove, Palatine and Herons Dale

