



Dear Parents, Carers and Families,

I hope you are all well. As stated in my previous letter, I explained that increasing school numbers would be dependent on government and local guidance. On Wednesday at 8.30pm, I received new advice from Lancashire County Council. Here is a summary:

Lancashire County Council is advising schools in the county not to open to more pupils from 1 June, but instead to continue with the current arrangements. This is because, in our assessment, we do not currently meet all five of the government's tests in Lancashire which would allow this decision to be taken safely.

We will regularly review the situation and provide further advice so that we can advise schools to open to more pupils as soon as we judge it safe to do so.

We are actively encouraging schools to follow this advice.

Local assessment by Dr Sakthi Karunathini (Director of Public Health and Wellbeing)

The government's five tests are outlined below:

- *Protect the NHS's ability to cope. We must be confident that we are able to provide sufficient critical care and specialist treatment right across the UK.*
- *See a sustained and consistent fall in the daily death rates from Covid-19 so we are confident that we have moved beyond the peak*
- *See that the rate of infection is decreasing to manageable levels across the board, although we don't see the results of all tests in a timely manner. In addition, we are starting to see social distancing not being followed everywhere across the county which poses the risk of new cases to rise.*
- *Be confident that the range of operational challenges, including testing capacity and PPE, are in hand, with supply able to meet future demand.*
- *Be confident that any adjustments to the current measures will not risk a second peak of infections that overwhelms the NHS.*

Locally, we are currently able to meet the requirements of the first three tests; however, we do not meet the requirements for the final two tests. The test and trace programme is not at a state of readiness to respond to Covid-19 community setting outbreaks in a timely manner, which poses a risk to school environments. Furthermore, we are not confident that adjustments to the current measures of the lockdown policy will not risk a second peak of infections locally.

Consequently, our advice to schools is to not re-open to more pupils on June 1st, but to continue with their current support systems that are in place. The safety and wellbeing of children, their families, and school staff outweigh the benefits of opening schools of 1st June.

The key information supporting this advice is that:

- *The current support system in schools for children of key workers and valuable children, which is how we describe our vulnerable children, is sufficient at this time. Additionally, safeguards are in place in Lancashire to support those children who are at risk in the community, and this support will continue.*



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- *There has been no evidence of education outcomes worsening due to the effects of government lockdown policy.*
- *It is not going to be possible to implement social distancing in early years school settings.*
- *There is currently no evidence of widespread immunity in community settings.*
- *There is a significant risk that should outbreaks occur in school settings, the current system will not allow for tests to be conducted in a timely manner and therefore, the virus will continue to spread.*

Schools will be kept well informed on a regular basis from the Director for Public Health in Lancashire and Lancashire County Council. We will regularly review the situation and provide further advice so that schools can re-open as soon as it is safe to do so.

In this challenging time, we recommend that everyone continue to follow the government advice of staying alert by:

- *Staying at home as much as possible.*
- *Working from home if you can.*
- *Limit contact with other people.*
- *Keep a 2m distance from other people.*
- *Wash your hands regularly.*

As a result of this advice, Britannia Community School arrangements has reverted to those originally in place under lockdown, which will continue to provide places for vulnerable pupils and critical workers. The school has already contacted those key workers affected to discuss arrangements and I would like to thank the school community for their continued support.

Once we have further guidance and direction from LCC we will progress with a plan for increased numbers of key workers and vulnerable children followed by the classes indicated by the Government, with safety remaining a priority. I appreciate that these are very challenging times for everyone but we will get through this together in the true Britannia family way. Please make sure that you check school spider regularly for updates and surveys which may follow in the coming weeks.

If you have any further queries or questions please do not hesitate to contact school on 01706874447 or via email to head@britannia.lancs.sch.uk .

Take care and stay safe.

Best Wishes,

Natalie Longstaff

Head Teacher

