



27 May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

**This morning we have received advice from the Local Authority to delay our wider reopening of the school from the 1<sup>st</sup> June to the 15<sup>th</sup> June - this is in response to the SAGE report on 22<sup>nd</sup> May.**

The Report states that there is, 'a consensus that evidence on the role of children in transmission of COVID-19 is unclear with a number of gaps in understanding'. It also says there is some evidence to suggest that 'children are as susceptible to COVID-19 as adults', but advised that is not conclusive.

After discussion with our Chair of Governors we acknowledge that although we have completed a thorough risk assessment and made adaptations in school to reduce the risk as much as possible, the rate of infection in the North East is still higher than other places. The government also set five tests to be met, which are:

1. 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
2. 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
3. Reliable data from SAGE showing that the rate of infection is decreasing to manageable levels across the board
4. Be confident that the range of operational challenges, including testing capacity and PPE, are in hand, with supply able to meet future demand
5. Be confident that any adjustments to the current measures will not risk a second peak of infections that overwhelms the NHS

Looking at these 5 tests, along with the publication of the SAGE papers, delay in Contact Tracing implementation, and infection rate data showing the North East as the highest in the country, they do not provide the clear higher level assurances that Durham County Council, school communities and parents have been seeking.

We hope you understand how difficult this decision to delay has been, however our ultimate priority is the safety of our whole community, and we must respond to the local situation.

***We will continue to open for the children of Key Workers, so if you do require this, please let us know.***

We will also continue to make telephone calls home again from next week.

If you need to contact school in the meantime, please do – 01429 836376 or [hesleden@durhamlearning.net](mailto:hesleden@durhamlearning.net)

Thank you once again for your understanding and continued support at this challenging time.

*Mrs Dunn*