

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have come to the end of Term 6 and our academic year. This has been a year like no other in my twenty-three years of teaching – one none of us will ever forget! Throughout the last few months, the safety and well-being of our children and staff has been at the heart of everything we have done to support and protect our school community.

As you know, I wrote to all of you last Friday to share our current plans for September. Any updates will be communicated before the children return on the 7th September. The 3rd and 4th September are Staff Development days and the children will not be in School.

When Years 1 to 6 return to school on the 7th September we will be dedicated particularly the first day for the children to get to know their new teacher, new routines, behaviour expectations and wellbeing to welcome the children back.

Attendance

I am aware that some parents may have concerns regarding Attendance expectations in September. We will work with the families of any children with underlying health conditions to support their return to school or to plan provision for them. We will follow Government and Local Authority advice to update our Attendance policy to include COVID 19. In the meantime, the guidance states:

In March when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, we made clear no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school.

Now the circumstances have changed and it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- *parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;*
- *schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence*
- *the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct*

Pupils who are shielding or self-isolating

We now know much more about coronavirus (COVID-19) and so in future there will be far fewer children and young people advised to shield whenever community transmission rates are high. Therefore, the majority of pupils will be able to return to school. You should note however that:

- *a small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)*
- *shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. Read the [current advice on shielding](#)*
- *if rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and that area only, will be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily absent (see below).*
- *some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school (usually at their next planned clinical appointment). You can find more advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health at [COVID-19 - 'shielding' guidance for children and young people.](#)*

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should monitor engagement with this activity.

Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

Well-being

As always, the safety and well-being of our children and staff is at the centre of everything we do. We are aware that some families may be reluctant or anxious about returning to school. If this is the case, I ask that you contact me as soon as possible through the office email office@staugustine.medway.sch.uk to enable us to put the right support in place to address this.

Today, all families were sent a well-being survey to complete to help us prepare for our September opening. We would be grateful if you could complete the survey to help us plan support for your child.

Year 6

Due to the COVID-19 protective measures we have in place in school as advised by the Government; we have not been able to have the usual end of Primary School celebrations that we traditionally hold. I have written to all of our Year 6 children and families to send them our best wishes and Mission Together rosary beads. We have also uploaded a lovely video presentation on our website to wish them every happiness in their new Secondary schools and let them know that we will all miss them.

I am so proud to be the Headteacher of our lovely school; with wonderful children and families, hard working staff and a strong family community bond.