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12th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Covid-19 Update WPS – Initial Response to Prime Minister’s statement on 10th May 2020

You will have heard the Prime Minister indicating that the government believes it may be in a position to implement a phased re-opening of schools from 1 June, starting with pupils in Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 6. This is part of the government’s conditional plan which it says will remain under regular review. It may also be that you experienced a range of emotions in relation to this announcement – I know we did.

I want to very clear that at Walkley Primary School, the whole staff want to get our pupils back into school as soon as it is safe to do so. Our team of staff are utterly dedicated to our school community and we have devoted our lives and careers to the care and education of young people – we do not want to see classrooms empty for a day longer than they need to be. At the same time, we must ensure that school is a safe place to be for children and staff alike.

Given that we have received no guidance on what the statement means and that the announcement is not a definite plan, we are unable to tell you what this means in practice at the moment but we do want to update you as to the steps we are planning to take to move things forward. Over the next few days, we will be conducting a series of virtual meetings as a Senior Leadership team and safeguarding team as well as liaising with various other colleagues as the week progresses. During these meetings we will discuss common approaches which will inform our own risk assessments and attempt to mediate some of the risks that this proposal brings. We also hope to receive some concrete guidance from the government and that hopefully this will arrive very soon. Ultimately, we hope this will support our thinking as we look to find solutions to foreseeable problems which include how to source the number of staff required, how to manage requirements to attempt to maintain social distancing with very young children who find this incredibly difficult and how to make use of classrooms that will only physically hold small numbers of children while social distancing is needed.

In the coming days we will be working on the following priorities:

- to gain a better understanding of the details of the government’s plan.
- to seek a clearer picture of the scientific evidence the government has based this plan on.
- to listen and understand the views of colleagues, including our various professional bodies.
- to get helpful and sound advice to you as I understand more.

We understand that you will want more detail as soon as possible and will have many questions and we are sorry that we aren’t in a position to answer any questions at this time. At the moment, while we await

more information from the government, it means in the short term nothing has changed and we will remain open to the children of key workers and vulnerable children and providing home learning via Tapestry and the Class Pages of the Walkley Primary School Website as we have been for the past two months. We will provide you with further information in the coming days and weeks once we are able to do so.

Whatever happens, please be assured that we will make decisions relating to any form of wider school opening based on what is safe and will communicate these to you as soon as we are able. Please do not worry in the meantime. We can all be certain that we have a fantastic team at Walkley and we will find a way through this uncertainty together. Thank you again for all that you are doing and for your continued support, good wishes and kind messages.

As ever, we hope that this finds you staying safe and well at home.

Walkley Primary School Safeguarding Team