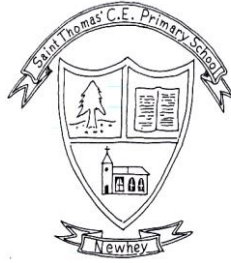


Headteacher: Mrs R Williams
Telephone: 01706 847093
Fax: 01706 882775
e-mail: office@stthomasnewhey.co.uk



St Thomas' CE Primary School
Huddersfield Road
Newhey
Rochdale
OL16 3QZ

22nd May 2020

Dear Parents

I am writing to you with an update on the wider opening of schools which is scheduled for 1st June, with Group A children beginning their 1st week on the 2nd June.

Unfortunately, this will not go ahead as planned. On Wednesday evening, I received a letter from the Local Authority which stated that they needed to quality assure risk assessments and recovery plans for schools as some unions had joined together to issue a joint letter, within which they stated that they would advise their members to seek legal advice if they contracted COVID-19 whilst working in school.

This information was shared with the Governing Board yesterday. The Governors made the decision to delay the wider opening of St. Thomas' School until Monday 8th June at the earliest, dependant on the outcome of the quality assurance exercise.

The Governors at this point, are disappointed that they have had to make this decision as they recognise the hard work that has gone into the plan and risk assessments by the school and are satisfied that the plans do meet the necessary health and safety guidelines as set out by the Government and are satisfied the school would be as safe as it can be at this moment in time.

In the event of being able to open on Monday 8th June for children in reception, year 1 and year 6, we would expect to continue with the plan as it is currently written – opening for Group B children.

The year 6 children should be able to attend Hollingworth Academy for their in school sessions. They will have their own entrance at the back of the building, a designated outdoor space and their own classroom and toilet facilities. They should not come into contact with any member of the Hollingworth staff or any of Hollingworth's pupils. The class will be staffed by Miss Lockley and Mrs Horridge. The children would need to take their own packed lunch and water bottle. At the moment, there are no plans for these children to experience any transition whilst they are at Hollingworth. It is simply a space to allow us back at school to make it easier to apply the new rules for schools to follow. The start date for year 6's may need to match the start date for Hollingworth's year 10s. This is the final detail that I am working on with Hollingworth's Headteacher. The start date could be the 8th or 15th June for year 6 children. I will let you know at the earliest opportunity.

I understand that some of you may be disappointed by the information contained in this letter and were looking forward to sending your children into school on June 2nd. I also fully understand your frustrations at changes to planning at this late stage, however, the Governing Board and I agreed that we could not open the school as planned due to the threat of possible legal action from the unions if a member of staff contracted the virus.

Thank you once again for your continued patience and support at this very challenging time for schools. And I sincerely hope that it won't be long before we can welcome more children back to St. Thomas', as a partially empty school is not quite the same!

Take care and stay safe.

Mrs Williams
Headteacher