

22 May 2020

Dear Families,

RE: Phased Re-Opening and Newsletter

I wrote to you on Tuesday and posted [this video](#) on Youtube to explain our plans with regards to phasing back more pupils – in our case Year 10 and then Year 6.

The Government have announced that they will not make a final decision on the viability of this date until Thursday 28 May and that they may then delay the phased return of additional pupils. In light of this, and reasons set out below, **we have taken the difficult decision that we will not start to phase the return of additional pupils until at the earliest Monday 8 June, and only then if the Government advice is that it is safe to do so.**

Our reasons for this are based on the principle that the safety of our pupils and staff is paramount and that the operation of our schools and college is dependent on our ability to keep them resourced and safe.

We need additional time to make sure that we have:

- Completed thorough risk assessments for individual pupils and staff, for groups of staff and for each individual building. This is a significant piece of work and is also ongoing as we adapt to any further guidance or people's health conditions change.
- Put in place any additional individual or site-specific safety measures following the risk assessments, which includes determining if we have enough staff able to attend on site to operate a safe service.
- Put in place measures to support social distancing on the basis of the physical 'space' available in each of their sites. Whilst we cannot guarantee social distancing, we will do everything we can, for example: removing and storing furniture, clearing areas to allow for more thorough cleaning, visibly marking up floor space in dining rooms, corridors and staircases, and instituting one-way entry and exit points.
- Secured additional cleaning throughout the day on all sites, and a schedule of regular deep cleaning.
- Secured sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), whilst unfortunately operating on the basis of receiving no Government advice for our sector on its use. It is a key tenet to support effective infection control and we have worked with the guidance issued to social care settings. Across our schools and college, we have always used disposable aprons, gloves and hand sanitizer to support personal care, medication and food preparation.



- Trained all staff in any new safety measures and protocols, for example on the use of face masks and (rare use of) eye goggles.
- Prepared young people through the use of social stories.
- Ensured transport arrangements are in place.

We are committed to working in partnership with both parents and local authorities to ensure that we are meeting the best interests of the children and young people we support. This must put their safety at its heart.

I understand that you may feel frustrated and I apologise for that. I ask that you please bear with us. We miss our young people, and like everyone else, we want a return to normal for them - and us!

We will continue to plan further and will communicate any updates as soon as we can. Please look out for emails, texts and our website.

To reiterate, no additional pupils will start on Monday 1st June. We will be in touch with Year 10 and Year 6 families to confirm their start date.

Thank you for support, please do take a minute to enjoy the termly newsletter that is also attached to this email.

As always, please contact me on helen.ralston@theriseschool.com with any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Ralston

Head of The Rise School