

TO: All schools and academies

12th June 2020

Heather Sandy
Executive Director
Children's Services
Lincolnshire County Council
County Offices
Newland
Lincoln LN1 1YL

Dear Parents/Carers of children in Lincolnshire schools

I recognise that we are living in unprecedented times and many of your children have been at home for many weeks. Schools have been open providing care for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children throughout the pandemic. They have also been providing a range of resources to support children at home which have been designed by leaders specifically for their families and context. This is alongside the resources provided by the Government with BBC Bitesize and The Oak Academy providing daily lessons for all year groups.

Schools have responded to the challenges at each stage of this pandemic and remained open through holiday times as well as ensuring children eligible for free school meals continue to receive these. Following the Government's decision about the wider re-opening of schools, our schools have considered the Government's guidance and what needs to be in place to provide places for children in the year groups the Government has prioritised. Every school's circumstances are unique. Schools will not be able to respond to the government's decisions in the same way. For some schools, the size of classrooms and play areas may limit the number of children who can be accommodated safely under social distancing rules and class 'bubbles'. In others, staffing shortages will limit the speed at which pupils can return. Some of the services that children and parents are used to, for example, school meals and breakfast clubs, may not be available immediately in every school.

For some schools the large numbers of critical worker children and vulnerable children already attending has meant that they have limited capacity for other year groups. For some schools it is possible to accommodate these groups and the year groups the Government prioritised. It is not possible to compare what is being provided in different school contexts as the size of buildings, configuration of classrooms and staffing arrangements means that not all schools will be able to provide the same experience in all schools across Lincolnshire.

The return of children to school settings and considering safe transport arrangements with social distancing in place gives us challenges for school transport. I would like to thank those parents who have made the decision in these circumstances to transport their children to school, this is very helpful.

Our secondary schools begin the task of delivering some face-to-face sessions for students in Year 10 and 12 next week. Schools are organising this in different ways across the authority. If you have child in these year groups, the school will let you know the arrangements they are making.

I realise the recent announcement about children in other year groups in primary schools not returning before the summer may be difficult for some of you. This is alongside the uncertainty about what the Government will expect from schools in the longer term and what the plans are for September. We are in constant contact with Department for Education officials to understand what the next steps are for the return of children to schools.

Our top priority is the safety of pupils, their families and school staff. Once further clarity is provided by the Department for Education, schools will need time to plan. They will work as quickly as they can to make the necessary arrangements and communicate these arrangements to parents as quickly as they can to you.

I appreciate the support you are providing to your children and their school at this time.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H Sandy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'H'.

Heather Sandy
Executive Director of Children's Services