

# HYDESVILLE TOWER SCHOOL

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Headmaster: Mr. Warren Honey BSc (Hons), MEd



Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you for your support since our return from the Easter break during which time we have transitioned fully to online teaching and learning. I am very proud of the way our staff have risen to the challenge and for their commitment and creativity in delivering such excellent provision at such short notice. I am also very proud of our children to see how well they have adapted so quickly to this unfamiliar approach to learning.

As you will know, the government has requested that we reopen our school and classrooms to Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June. We are very pleased to reopen for these classes as we believe that children need their friends and the nurturing school environment, and the classroom is the best place for their education. We have given great consideration to opening other classes in addition to these but unfortunately, we are not permitted to deviate from the government's directive. We are following the Department for Education's guidance closely as we prepare for reopening. These measures include teaching small classes or clusters of pupils (often referred to as 'bubbles'), social distancing in the school buildings as much as possible and an enhanced cleaning regime both at the end of the day and during the day – as well as regular and careful handwashing. We are making preparations now to make sure all this is in place and I would like to assure you that we shall only reopen after completing a thorough risk assessment.

Although we understand it is not possible to eliminate all risk, with the right precautions in place, schools are considered to be very low risk environments for the coronavirus. Furthermore, we are also of the opinion that children's mental health and well-being can suffer in isolation – a view that is being increasingly shared amongst the medical experts – so there are risks in children continuing to stay at home by themselves away from their peers for prolonged periods of time.

We have been working hard on our reopening plans and have decided it is prudent to have a staff preparation day to walk through the risk assessment and do a 'dress rehearsal' for welcoming students. Our "dry run" day will be on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June and therefore we will welcome children back from Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June. Online teaching and learning will continue on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June for all of the other year groups.

I need to point out that as our teaching staff increasingly return to the classroom full time, we will be less able to teach these groups online. Of course, we understand that there will be some children who are shielding or who have members of the household with underlying health conditions; these children will not be able to return to school and in these cases we shall be providing their curriculum at home. When demand for onsite teaching reaches a level that we no longer have the staff available to deliver online teaching, we will revert to the remote protocol as we did in the immediate aftermath of the closure of school in March, combined with regular check-ins with their teacher.

We are really pleased to report that, following our recent survey, a large number of our parents in the year groups in question have indicated that they are keen to return their children to school, provided it is safe to do so. In order that we can plan effectively, I would be grateful if you could complete the

attached survey to advise me of your final decision for your child, in light of the information provided. We hope for as close to full attendance as possible.

Some of our sister schools in Switzerland and Vietnam have reopened recently. They report the joyful return of their young charges and we anticipate celebrating at the front gate when some of our own pupils return. We look forward to a time when all our children can come back to school; in the meantime, other year groups will continue with their current online learning programme.

Finally, I would like to clarify the school's position on fees for the rest of the summer term for all pupils. Although we communicated that once schools reopen we would revert to normal fees, we have decided to waive this for the remainder of the summer term. The exceptional circumstances, the economic situation, and the value we place on our relationship with you – our parent community – means we have decided the existing discount will continue for this academic year. We hope that this, combined with the freezing of tuition fees for next year, will go some way to assisting you.

Thank you once again for your support of the school this summer term, and for your encouragement and feedback. As ever, please let me know if you have any questions.

Kindest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Warren Honey'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Warren' written in a larger, more prominent script than the surname 'Honey'.

Warren Honey

Headmaster