



DOWNSEND
SCHOOL



Proud to be nominated in the
**Independent Schools of
the Year 2019 Awards**

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Dear Parent

Re: Phased Re-Opening of Downsend

Thank you for your continued patience and understanding over recent days, as we have interpreted the changing guidance from HM Government and applied it within the context of our own educational setting. We have been delighted to welcome almost 90% of our Year 2 pupils on site, to join those in Year 6 who have been attending school since 1 June. Smiles on the faces of pupils, parents and teachers alike have been very much the order of the day, and I am delighted to be able to confirm that we will be extending a similar programme to the remaining Year groups over the coming weeks. Firstly, a reminder of the principles that have guided our decision-making:

1. The importance of protecting the bubble system, in maximum classes of 15, in order to minimise any transmission
2. The need to maintain protocols (drop-off, cleaning, pick-up, break times etc) in order to ensure that pupil and staff wellbeing is at the heart of all we undertake
3. The importance of all of our Year groups. We do not believe that any Year group is more or less important than any other. Your children are equally valued, as are you, our parents, so it has been our intention to ensure that no pupil is exposed to the prospect of six months without spending time in the school, seeing their friends and teachers
4. The need to continue to provide an effective online learning provision for those Year groups not attending school in person during term time.

We have looked at a range of scenarios over the past 48 hours as we have considered bringing multiple Year groups back at various points. However, in considering these, we were unable to stay true to all those guiding principles. As we hear of local schools having to close as bubbles have been burst, we need to ensure that we reach the 10 July having given every Downsend pupil the opportunity to return and benefit, in the way in which Year 2 have this week. The schedule for the remaining 4 weeks of the most remarkable academic year is as follows:

- Week beginning 15 June: Years 2 & 6**
- Week beginning 22 June: Years 3 & 6**
- Week beginning 29 June: Years 4 & 6**
- Week beginning 6 July: Years 5, 6, 7 & 8**

This programme will offer fairness to all families, as well as the reassurance that safety protocols continue to be rigorous. It will allow all pupils to engage in end of year activities and prize giving ceremonies. Most importantly, it will allow them to be normal schoolchildren again. The Heads of School will write with more details prior to your allotted week; we can assure you of a warm welcome!

Yours faithfully,

Ian Thorpe
Headmaster

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