20 May 2020

A statement by north Lancashire primary schools on their re-opening:

Dedicated and caring staff in primary schools across the district continue to stay open to children of critical workers and vulnerable children – children with a social worker or unmet needs at home and those with an education health care plan (EHC) if appropriate. We are encouraging all eligible children to attend school (where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household).

We want to see all our children return to school but the safety of our pupils, staff and families is always our first priority. We are deeply concerned about the government’s plans for our youngest children in Reception, Year 1 and Nursery age to return on June 1st . Although the Government states that, ‘Early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2m apart from each other and staff.’ they ask that ‘If you can keep older children within those small groups 2 metres away from each other, you should do so.’ Sufficient evidence to base this difference of approach has not been shared and therefore the risks around managing our youngest children are unclear.

We are asking the government to publish the scientific and medical evidence that underpins their guidance and the decision to reopen schools at this stage. We believe that this clarification is important in assuring parents and staff that it is safe to return.

Schools were asked, ‘to begin to plan for a phased reopening of schools from June 1st at the earliest’ and the Prime Minister aspires to all pupils to be in school for a month before the end of term. The government’s guidance to schools has been changing each day since the announcement. Also, following the safety advice will make it difficult for many schools to physically accommodate the proposed children and it is incompatible with the prime minister's plan to open for further year groups. This lack of clarity is deeply concerning. Currently, schools cannot commit to arrangements for  Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 in addition to the children of key workers and vulnerable children on June 1st.

When school leaders have a clear understanding of the safety risks to children, staff and their  families, individual schools will make decisions about specific year groups and the provision that will be offered based upon their own building capacity, staffing levels and risk assessments.

Stephen Belbin, St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School

Adrian Ibison, Carnforth Community Primary School

Roger Shone, Moorside School, Lancaster

Mr. J. Wilson, Cawthorne's Endowed School, Abbeystead

Rune Duncan, Thurnham Glasson Christ Church C of E Primary School

Sarah Baines, Quernmore CE VC Primary School

Mel MacKinnon, **Willow Lane Community Primary School**

Cathy Thomas, Ellel St Johns Church of England Primary School

Kirsty Sutton, Lancaster Road Primary School

**Nicola Holt, The Cathedral Catholic Primary School**

Alison Aylott, Scotforth St Paul's C of E Primary and Nursery School

Claire Weymouth, St Wilfrid's CE Primary School, Halton

Paul Slater, Trumacar Nursery and Community Primary School

Daniel Hargreaves, Bolton-le-Sands C.E. Primary School

Linda Pye, Ryelands, Primary and Nursery School

Katie Walsh, Silverdale St John’s CE Primary School

Mrs Katrina C Gale, Yealand C.E. Primary School,

Dianne Cross, Dolphinholme Community Primary School

Joanne Easthope , Overton St Helen’s CE Primary School

John Ross, Great Wood School, Morecambe

Keith Wright Westgate Primary School, Morecambe

Siobhan Collingwood Morecambe Bay Community Primary School

Sue Penney Torrisholme Primary School

Paul Bowden Slyne with Hest, St. Lukes CE Primary School

Catherine Armistead Skerton St Luke’s CE Primary School

Rose Starkey Dallas Road Community Primary School

Peter Harrison St. Mary’s Catholic Primary School

Emma Simpson Christchurch CE Primary School

Rob Smith Mossgate Primary School

Sarah Watson Archbishop Hutton V.C. Primary School

Ged McKevitt St Bernadette’s Catholic Primary School