



Garlinge Primary School and Nursery

Dear Parents and Carers,

The return to school update - Tuesday 19th May

I once again hope that both you and your families remain well as we continue to move through the initial phase of our release from lockdown. A week after it was announced that the government would like certain primary school pupils to return to school on a phased basis from Monday 1st June, I feel it would be useful to update you as to what is going on behind the scenes at Garlinge.

Throughout last week we received a raft of different information both from the government, the local authority and teaching unions. Whilst this information is gradually clarifying certain things, it is also clear that this continues to be a fairly fast moving situation which I am sure will continue over the coming days. Currently, my team and I are planning for the requested phased return to school and will continue to do so until we are advised to do anything differently. This has so far involved meetings with senior members of my Site, Business and Teaching teams, to ensure that any return can be well ordered, calm and as safe as possible for pupils, staff and parents and carers.

I would like to thank so many of you who have replied to our survey via Weduc, and indeed all of you who are now signed up to the app. Whilst we had only just started to use this when schools were officially closed, it has been incredibly beneficial and we received nearly 300 replies within the first 36 hours of the survey going live. Guidance had advised that schools should canvas the feelings of parents in order to assist with planning and I am extremely grateful to everyone who took the time to reply. I personally read every single one of the replies and was grateful to receive the opinions given, particularly in relation to personal circumstance and understanding.

I would like to address a couple of things that were raised within the survey. We needed to give three options (of 'Yes', 'No' and 'Unsure') to get an idea of parental wishes and I completely understand that many of you replied 'Unsure' as at that point there was still over two weeks to go until the proposed re-opening. It would only be correct that those of you who had not made up their mind wanted to see how things progressed and indeed may well continue to do this. I will be looking to re-survey in the coming days and I urge you to take the time to complete it again as it will provide a 'direction of travel' as far as Parents and Carers thoughts are concerned, which will further help to inform our planning. If you have already explained why you are unsure and this is still the case, please feel free not to add a reason again. This will be very important to the final stages of our planning and I will be grateful for your assistance.

Finally, I would like once again to request that you get in touch with the school if there is anything that we can assist with. I know that many of you are now in touch by email with your child's/children's teacher and this has seemed to be a mutually beneficial arrangement as teachers have told me that they have really enjoyed hearing about what pupils have been doing in their home learning. As I have said before, admin staff continue to be available to assist with any matters and if you need to speak to myself or any members of my staff, please contact the school office on 01843 221877 or info@garlinge.kent.sch.uk.

Please ensure that you continue to stay safe and look after yourselves and your families and I will update plans regarding school opening regularly via the school website (www.garlingeprimary.co.uk) and the Weduc communication app.

Yours faithfully

James Williams
Headteacher