



19th June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

You will no doubt already be aware by now that the Government's previously announced 'ambition' for all primary aged pupils to return to school before the Summer break has been cancelled. The Government has accepted that such a plan was not feasible or practically possible under their own current social distancing guidance for schools. They have also confirmed that apart from Years 10 and 12, secondary aged pupils (Years 7 and 8 for middle schools) will not return to school until September 'at the earliest'.

After some persistent lobbying of the Department for Education, there has been a recognition, finally, that there needs to be some flexibility for Middle Schools to be able to offer their Year 8 pupils some closure to their time at Middle School prior to transition to High School.

It has taken all of our resources, and efforts, to bring our Year 6 pupils back from 1st June whilst at the same time, continuing to admit children of key workers who have been attending since 23rd March and maintain our remote learning platform. Due to the size and nature of our school buildings and classrooms, it is not possible for other pupils to safely return in ‘bubbles’ of no more than 15 and maintain the social distancing protocols that we have to abide by to keep our staff, pupils and their families safe.

Whilst we cannot, therefore, invite our Year 8 pupils back to school for any extensive time, we are thankful that, with careful planning and preparation, we will be able to at least provide an opportunity for our Year 8 pupils to spend a couple of days with their teachers and peers before they move on the High School. It is important to note that we will be having to use the same social distancing guidance and ‘bubbles’ approach of no more than 15 pupils per class that Year 6 are currently following. To enable us to do this safely we will be undertaking the following steps and changes to our current provision:

* **School will be closed to Year 6, for the Summer break from the end of Tuesday 14th July**
* **School** **will** **remain closed on Wednesday 15th July to all children, to enable extensive cleaning to take place in preparation for Year 8**
* **We will open for Year 8 pupils only (plus the children of key workers) on Thursday 16th and Friday 17th July so they can have an opportunity of spending some time with their teachers and peers before they leave middle school**

We are sure the parents/carers of our Year 6 pupils will understand the importance of being able to offer our Year 8 pupils the chance of completing their Middle School journey before they leave us. We do not want their final days with us to be those anxious ones in March as we approached lockdown and we have had to work exceptionally hard to make sure they will at least have some time at school to ‘say goodbye’.

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We will be in touch with Year 8 parents/carers over the next couple of weeks to give further guidance and detail of how we will accomplish this, including a request to let us know if you intend to send your child back for those final two days.

At this stage, we do not know what will happen in September and all we can do is wait for the Government to issue further guidance. We understand this is a very difficult situation for everyone concerned and we thank you for your patience and for everything you are doing to support your child's remote learning or their return to school in Year 6 since 1st June.

Once again, we would like to thank you all for continuing to support us through such challenging and unprecedented times and we whole-heartedly thank all of our brilliant pupils, those in school and those who remain at home, for coping so well without 'normal' school.

Yours faithfully,



**Mr. G. L. Roberts**

**Headteacher/CEO The Spire CE Learning Trust**

