St Michael's Nursery and Infant School
Station Road, Workington, CA14 2UY Tel. 01900 608111
Our website address: www.smhwkt.cumbria.sch.uk

May 15th 2020

Dear Parents and Families,

I hope this finds you all safe and well.

By now, you will all be aware of the government proposals to reopen schools from the 1st June, after half term. The Prime Minister has stated that he hopes some schools may be able to re-open to children from Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. It is very important that I stress several points in relation to this ambition.

Firstly, there is not an expectation for all schools to open on 1st June. The safety of children, their families and our staff in school and their families must **remain our priority.** Any return to school will need careful planning, and must take into account our site, staffing capacity and a wide range of measures that need to be in place so that we can do our best to ensure the safety and well-being of children, staff and parents.

Detailed risk assessments must be carried out with the staff and our governors for us to determine what provision we are able to offer and when we are able to offer it. This is a very detailed and time-consuming process and one that cannot be hurried.

Secondly, it is not compulsory for children to attend when we reopen. Parents will not be fined for not sending their child to school. It is vital that parents know we understand that, were we to offer places to your child's year group, it is a very personal decision as to whether or not parents wish their child to return to school under the current circumstances. Parents should not feel under pressure, and will of course be aware that the school environment will inevitably be very different to what the children are used to. Children who are unable to/choose not to return to school, will continue to be supported with home learning by our team, just as they have been during this half term. We

understand and support the view that as parents you know your child best, and will make the right decision about what you feel is in the best interests of the safety and well-being for your child and your family.

Thirdly, the government has proposed that we **open to children of key workers** and other priority groups. If as a parent you work in the critical sector of key workers, (education, key public services, local government, transport, public safety, utility services) and you do not have childcare provision, you are able to request a place for your child.

Key worker children will be looked after by a range of staff from across the school, most likely on a rota basis. In order for us to plan provision effectively I would appreciate it if you could contact school if you require a key worker child place, and the days you are likely to need it.

Finally, if you could let me school know your initial thoughts on whether you think you will send your child into school if and when the time arises, that too would be helpful.

To summarise:

- **Please email school via the office email address if you are a key worker of a child in any year group and need childcare after half term. Please indicate the days you would need it.**

- **If you are a parent/carer of a child in Reception or Year 1, please let your class teacher or the office know if you are likely to send your child to school, were we able to offer this.**

Once school has this initial information we can then build this into our risk assessment and planning. We will then be in a better place to work out when we can reopen, how many classrooms we will need and how many staff will be needed to work with those groups. Social distancing is not possible with such young children, hence the numbers are crucial to the planning.

It is safe to say at this point that school will look very different when we first return. Groups will be small, those groups will not be able to mix with other groups **at all** during the school day, including lunch breaks and outdoors and the curriculum will look very different to the one we would normally be delivering. This is something that staff will need support with as well as the children when they return.

I do recognise that these are very challenging times, and I appreciate your ongoing support.

Rest assured the safety of our children, staff and families will be at the forefront of any decisions made. I will continue to do my best to update you with any further information as and when it becomes available.

Please respond to the above information as soon as possible or by Monday 18th May 12pm at the latest. Thank you.

Please stay safe and take care

Warmest wishes

Mrs Richardson

And on behalf of Mrs Sheena Brown, Chair of Governors