



29th June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Moving Forward – Next Steps – September 2020

As we move towards the latter part of the Summer Term our minds are very much turning to September 2020, as no doubt are yours. We're sure that we all hope the start to the new school year will represent a positive beginning, a beginning that sees us able to welcome all children back to school which will see learning and play spaces bursting with activity, noise and enthusiasm. In planning for this period we are keen to engage you in sharing our vision for the school in September and providing you with an opportunity to share your hopes.

In what has been very challenging circumstances, your support, patience and consideration of the school community has allowed us to provide you and your child with what we hope have been successful and positive opportunities to maintain connections with the school. These opportunities have seen a range of interactions, whether this has been through your child coming into school or through telephone calls, emails, website updates, online get-togethers and so much more.

We hope that your contact with school has led to all members of our community continuing to feel connected in a way which has been comfortable. Your encouragement as well as your willingness to trust us with your children (where this has been possible), is greatly valued and never taken for granted.

We are clear that the needs of your children should sit at the heart of any plans that we make for September 2020. We recognise the unprecedented period that children and families are living through and the many ways in which this may have had an impact. Fundamentally children have seen their school close and become largely inaccessible to them; they have been forced to distance themselves from friends and family members; they have had the structure and the rhythm of their days and weeks taken from them; they have been forced to cope with a world that has been and continues to be presented to them in ways that do not feel familiar. All of these experiences and resulting feelings impact upon the well-being of children, which is why we are keen to ensure we have this at the forefront of our minds as we plan for the 'next steps.'

We are all keen for children to return to school - to their school, in a way which is supportive of them. All of the team at Haytor View have been thinking hard about how children will be best supported in September, a time that will see a return to friendships, relationships and learning. The government and media have rightly been talking a lot about the 'gaps' that children will be dealing with following school being absent for them. We are keen that whatever we do in September provides children with the very best start for managing and ultimately closing such 'gaps'.

It is our job as a school to ensure that children reach their potential, whatever the circumstances. We understand that providing a range of rich child-centred approaches will provide the most productive foundation for engaging in 'catch up' learning, as a result of the time they have spent out of school. We have faced some extraordinary circumstances this year and we plan to respond to them when children return in September, in a way which is both positive and innovative. **We'd like to share this with you and find out whether you feel our starting point is a good one for your child, your family and for you.**

Our Preferred Plan

- Our preferred plan for September will see children from Reception to Year 6, spending the first half of the Autumn Term re-joining their existing teacher in their existing classroom. They will be recorded as being in their next school year - they are not being 'held back'.
- Following the Autumn Half Term break, children from Reception to Year 6 will move to their next teacher in their new classroom. They will spend the rest of the school year with their new teacher, transitioning in the normal way in September 2021 into the next school year.

Why do we think this is a good idea?

- We feel that a return to a familiar classroom, with familiar adults, familiar routines and familiar children will allow children to feel safe, secure and happy to be back.
- We feel that this sense of familiarity, safety and security will be critical to children's successful transition back to school, friendships and learning.
- We feel that returning to spend time with adults who are very familiar with them will allow us to better view children's emotional and learning needs based upon what we know about them already. These needs will likely have changed for many based upon their recent experiences.
- Teachers and Learning Partners with existing relationships with your child will be better placed to consider each child's level of attainment following their time out of school, rather than 'new' adults, as we seek to re-connect them with prior learning pre lockdown. This will support each child's future learning and transition in October 2020 into their new class.
- Transition to your child's new class after half term can be planned and managed in a way that will be more supportive of their future development and will be based on the well-being and needs of every child and family, rather than simply putting them in a new class following months away from school structure and routine.
- Parents and families will be able to feel more comfortable working within existing relationships with school adults where we can provide a bespoke return based on your child's needs, before being part of the transition process towards their child's next class.

How will this happen?

- At the moment we don't know all of these details, but we know that we do feel that it would offer the best possible start following your child's return to school.
- We will continue to consider and respond to the guidance from the Government as it is released, with your child's well-being firmly placed in any decisions we make.
- With your help (as always) we believe that we can make it happen!

So what do you think?

Do you think that the approach detailed above would be a good starting point for your child?

Get in touch

We'd invite you to share your thoughts with us – a simple 'yes' or 'no' would be great. If you'd like to share more thoughts then please feel free to do so. We'd appreciate hearing from you through the School Gateway or using email via admin@haytorview.devon.sch.uk. If you find yourself on the school site with children over the coming week or two you are welcome to share your thoughts with any member of the school team.

Your support & engagement during this period has been invaluable to us. Your responses, however brief, will be very welcome as we chart next steps that frankly, no school in the country has ever been on before. Thank-you once again for everything that you are bringing us.

Yours sincerely

Katy Galling
Head of Learning and Development

Niema Bohrayba
Chair of Governing Board