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Dear parents/carers,

We recognise that since the lockdown began in March the past two months have been very difficult for children, families and carers. Home schooling has become the norm for the vast majority and this has been challenging for both pupils and their families at times.

We are incredibly proud of the way that Herefordshire's schools and settings have been responding to the lockdown, developing and using learning materials and online learning resources to enable pupils to participate, keep in contact and learn. As a council we are working with schools, colleges, and early year's settings to enable children and young people to access support and education in safe classroom environments and at home.

With the safety of pupils and staff the priority the schools, colleges and settings have collectively continued to educate and support children and young people across the county, including 800 children of Herefordshire key workers and vulnerable children. This work has been carried out in an ever changing environment and the schools, colleges and settings have demonstrated their flexibility and commitment, including remaining open during the school holidays and distributing food or vouchers for families who need help.

On 10 May, the Government announced that if the lockdown measures continue to reduce the spread of the coronavirus, primary school children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 could return to school from 1 June, and secondary school children in Years 10 and 12 are also expected to have some contact (a mix of face to face and on line contact) with their teachers before the end of the academic year.

We are all in the planning stage. We know that there will be more government guidance. We also realise that significant numbers of pupils may well not be returning to schools at this time and this continues to mean schools have to put in place virtual learning and children and families have to make arrangements to continue to educate

Safety for you children and the staff is our collective priority and we know there are different views on what the best way forward is. Communication will continue through your schools and settings as we all focus on what is right and safe for children and for staff.

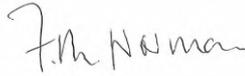
Schools and settings are considering what to do as more pupils return - this will vary from site to site according to the size of rooms and outdoor areas for example. They are also considering the premises themselves (distancing where appropriate), the cleaning and hygiene measures required, and working through the usual things schools do after a closure. So what each school does may differ from some other schools. If a school cannot open, for whatever reason, we will ask them to talk it through with us and work with them on the issues, but not to hurry beyond what they consider to be safe.

We are incredibly grateful to you as parents and carers for all of the help and support you have given schools, colleges and settings during this unprecedented time. We would like to thank you for your patience and understanding whilst we plan for the next stages.

Yours sincerely



Chris Baird
Director
Children and Families



Councillor Felicity Norman
Cabinet Member for Children and
Families and Deputy Leader