



SIR TOM FINNEY COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

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Dear all parents/carers and families

You will have heard and read much in the news, press and social media about the re-opening of schools on June 1st. **The focus of this is mainstream schools.** All that is being asked of special schools within this context is to carry on as we have been doing. Which is to remain open for a specific small number of individual young people based upon a risk assessment of need and vulnerability.

The priority individuals using this risk assessment approach are:

1. Those children who have at least one of their parents in the household listed as an essential key worker (*according to the government definition of essential key workers*).
2. Those children who have a safeguarding concern or social care input and it is agreed with social worker and family or residential settings that it would be safer and in the best interests of the child to be attending school.
3. Those children where it is deemed, via a risk assessment agreed between school and family, that it is safer and in the child's best interests to be attending school.

The initial principle of **'Stay at home, be safe if it is in the child's best interests'** still applies. This is particularly the case for those who have been recognised as being:

1. Classed as clinically extremely vulnerable eg. with a pre-existing serious medical condition.
2. Classed as clinically vulnerable as it is clear that within a special school context a two metre social distance cannot be maintained at all times.
3. Those showing significant extremes of fear and anxiety; our experience is showing this is prevalent within those young people presenting with ASD.
4. Those whose families still have concerns and feel it is simply safer for their child to remain at home for the foreseeable future. (*Currently there are no penalties in place for any family who want their child to remain at home, because they feel it is the safest place to be*).

In order for school to remain 'open' we have undertaken Premises, Organisational and Operational risk assessments and have been reliant on staff numbers being available to meet the needs, demands and challenges of those attending. This approach will continue to be the methodology which determines how many young people can attend in order to maintain as risk-safe an environment as possible.

However, I must stress that no environment, particularly in a special school, can guarantee a 100% risk/virus free environment, we can only take guidance and advice and put in specific measures to support working toward this. Attached is a document that outlines the measures in place and a 'blueprint' for how school will run for the foreseeable future.

Shaun Jukes
Headteacher
20.05.2020