

Dear Parents and Carers,

Once again, much of the national news coverage has this week been focused upon the debate around whether or not schools should open for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 aged children in line with the June 1st target set by the Prime Minister. This issue has dominated the thoughts of school leaders throughout the country, my own included, since Boris Johnson made his announcement on May 10th. I therefore make no apologies for this again being the main focus here.

If, and this is by no means a certainty at this moment, the Government decides to ask schools to implement plans for a phased re-opening from June 1st for particular year groups, the Governors and I have taken the decision to maintain our current arrangements in opening for key worker and vulnerable children only for the time being. This means that **we do not plan to open more widely for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children on June 1st**. We will, however, be reviewing this on a week-by-week basis and, as soon as we believe it is safe to do so, we will enter into a phased re-opening.

This decision has been taken on the basis of trying to balance what we know (and don't know!) about the spread of COVID-19 as well as a strong focus on the needs and views of our school community.

I will try to set out the reasons for this decision as straightforwardly as I can by answering the questions below.

Is it safe for Alverton to enter a phased re-opening on June 1st?

This is the most important question of all. The short answer is that we simply don't know at the moment.

Before we can significantly expand the numbers of children and staff coming into school on a daily basis, we have to be as sure as we can be that we are not placing children, staff and indeed our families and the wider community at risk of harm. Our risk assessment has raised serious concerns about the potential consequences of opening the school to a significantly increased number of children at this time.

One of the main areas of concern is that we simply cannot maintain any sort of social distancing in school. Indeed, for our younger children, this may well be as undesirable in terms of their mental well being as it is impossible to put into practice.

Of course there are very few things we do in life that are risk free; the issue here is that we cannot put measures in place to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. I don't think that anyone would feel comfortable with the school gambling with the health of our children, staff and families.

... cont'd

What did parents say?

I would like to say a huge thank you to all of the parents from those year groups targeted for a June 1st return for completing the Survey Monkey questionnaire in such numbers and with such honesty and fair-mindedness. I can assure you that all of the views expressed were considered by me and the Alverton Governing Body and played a large part in our decision making. A full copy of the Parent Survey results and comments can be found on the school website.

In short, the percentage of parents who indicated that they would intend to send their children back to school on June 1st if we were to re-open was low: Nursery - 18%, Reception - 28%, Year 1 -18%, Year 6 - 5%. Of those parents who indicated that they would send children back if this were an option, the vast majority were key workers who are either already sending their children into school, or key workers whose partner can no longer look after the children because they have to return to work themselves.

We were touched by the overwhelming support and gratitude that parents expressed through their comments for the school and our staff. As part of this support there was a strong feeling that the Home-School Learning provision we offer has been very successful and many parents would rather continue with this than send children back. We will therefore be looking to review and further develop this Home-School Learning offer in response to this review.

Parents surveyed expressed widespread concerns relating to a phased re-opening on June 1st, most commonly citing the lack of scientific evidence, a lack of confidence in the overall re-opening policy at this time and an inability to maintain social distancing as their chief worries.

What are the staff views?

The staff were also surveyed for their opinions on a June 1st phased re-opening. Staff views were closely aligned with those of parents. There is a clear desire to get children back into school and return to the way things were prior to the COVID-19 crisis. However, staff also expressed a similarly high level of concern to that shown by parents regarding the lack of clear evidence for a safe and manageable phased re-opening at this time.

What happens next?

Our school has not closed since the lockdown began in March. With the exception of Bank Holidays, we have been open every day including the Easter Holidays and next week's Half Term Holiday for the children of key workers. The demand for these places is increasing rapidly and we will continue to do our best to meet this need, as safely as we are able to, in order to support our local community.

Whatever the decision announced by the Government at the end of this month, we do not intend to enter a phased re-opening for particular year groups from June 1st. We will however continue to offer an extensive Home-School learning provision, further improving on this where possible.

We will also continually review the national and local situation with regard to the COVID-19 virus, and will seek to enter a phased re-opening for particular year groups as soon as we believe that the risks associated with this are acceptable and manageable.

Thank you for your continued support for our school. We really do appreciate it.

Martin Higgs

Remember – safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

If you have a safeguarding concern, please contact Martin Higgs (Designated Safeguarding Lead) at head@alverton.cornwall.sch.uk

or, if it is out of school hours, please contact the Multi Agency Referral Agency on 0300 1231 116;

E-mail:

multiagencyreferralunit@cornwall.gov.uk

Have we got your correct address?

In the coming weeks we may be posting important information home to you. If you've changed your address recently or are unsure if we have the correct address for you, please let the office know as soon as possible.

Contacting School

Please be aware that whilst school remains open for some children, there will be no admittance to the building or grounds for any parents, visitors or children not currently at school. If you need to contact us, please do so by email (secretary@alverton.cornwall.sch.uk) or by calling the office between 9am- 1pm, Monday to Friday on 01736 364087.

Daisy's Diary

The circular orchard is really settling in now and has had lots of blossom this year and LOTS of buttercups. And I've managed to do a bit of the wildlife meadow - all the sunflowers are in and I've put clover underneath them so the bees can have a double breakfast. There's lots of wildlife at school especially in the odd times I've been in (wandering about in my pyjamas with mud all over me). I've seen the jay that visits the field sometimes, and a beautiful woodpecker who sat in the big tree at the bottom of the ball playground and did a very loud mating call (he was drumming with his beak very hard). I

thought he'd be quite big as he was so noisy - but he was small with a red bottom!



To stop the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), you should try to avoid close contact with anyone you do not live with.

This is called social distancing.

Stay at home as much as possible.

It's very important to stay at home as much as possible.

There are only a few specific reasons to leave your home, including:

- for work, if you cannot work from home
- going to shops to get things like food and medicine, or to collect things you've ordered
- to exercise or spend time outdoors
- for any medical reason, to donate blood, avoid injury or illness, escape risk of harm, provide care or help a vulnerable person.

When outside your home, it's important to try to stay 2 metres (3 steps) away from anyone you do not live with.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

This is an unusual time and we are conscious that some people and families will be finding it difficult. We have included some helpline numbers on this page in case anyone finds them useful.



Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

The Trust has its own Out of Hours telephone support provided by Support Matters Cornwall. This service operates from 5pm to 9am on weekdays and 24 hours a day at weekends and bank holidays. The service is open to all patients (aged 16+) under the care of the Trust's mental health services. Support can be delivered over the telephone, via text, email or web chat. Call free on **0800 001 4330**.

Penzance CTIPA Foodbank

The CTIPA Foodbank in Penzance has let us know that it is no longer necessary to obtain a voucher to receive food from them and that they are open every day at the moment. If their support would be helpful to you at this time, just phone Vryan or Adele in the office in confidence on 01736 364087 and they can phone the Foodbank for you who will be able to help. The Foodbank are extremely busy at the moment and are very grateful for any donations.



Online Safety

Whilst there are huge benefits to being online in order to stay connected to family and friends during this period, many parents may feel concerned about the activities and content their children are accessing. This guidance outlines resources to help keep children safe from different risks online and where to go to receive support and advice.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online>

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.



There's a good chance you already know what the PlayStation 4 (PS4) is. Sony's video game console is often touted as being one of the best-selling of all time, with over 100 million units shifted worldwide. With over seven years of polishing and fine-tuning under its belt, you'd expect the console to be one of the safest around. While this is overwhelmingly true, there are still things parents should be on the lookout for whether they're children are starting it up for the first time or they're already experienced users.

AGE RESTRICTION
GAME SPECIFIC PEGI RATING - See Individual Title Packaging

What parents need to know about PLAYSTATION 4




SAFETY CONCERNS

PlayStation users are able to add each other as friends by simply inputting another player's username and sending them a friend request. If accepted, they can chat openly from the console's dashboard, including voice chatting in a private party. If players know each other, this can be a great way to talk privately while in games, without having to interact directly with others. But, similarly, if a stranger adds a child and is accepted as a friend, they have direct access to them.

ACCESS TO PERSONAL INFORMATION

The PlayStation Network (or PSN) is essentially used to house all the other PlayStation services (like PlayStation Plus and PlayStation Store) under one roof. Accounts are free and come in two forms: master accounts and sub accounts, with master accounts having access to the parental controls on a console. If a user's ID and account password were compromised (if a child was tricked into revealing it or if a hacker obtained the details otherwise) then it could provide access to personal information or banking details.

ONLINE BULLYING

Sometimes in an online game, players will be able to freely chat with each other. While these interactions will mostly be positive and about having fun in a game, some people will take this opportunity to use offensive or abusive language or may just want to aggravate other players. In some cases, it may amount to harassment, trolling or cases of online bullying.

ADULT CONTENT IN GAMES

The PlayStation offers a huge variety of different games, all with different age ratings. From shooting games to driving, sports, educational titles and everything in between, they all need special attention when considering a purchase, as some can contain adult content or explicit language with isn't always suitable for young children. The best way to know what a game involves is to check out its PEGI rating which will be on the game box, or on the website page before you buy. Remember that these ratings serve as a guide, and the ultimate choice lies with parents to know what is acceptable and appropriate for their children.

SCREEN ADDICTION

The PS4 can provide hours of entertainment. As well as being an avenue to play games, it provides the ability to browse the internet, watch live TV or stream video services such as Netflix, Amazon or YouTube. Such is the variety, that it can be easy to switch between modes and rack up time in front of the screen. Some children may also find it difficult to control the amount of time they play games, potentially leading to gaming disorder.

Safety Tips for Parents & Carers

CREATE 'CHILD FAMILY MEMBER' ACCOUNTS

The PS4 allows parents to set up different accounts for different family members, including children. This will allow you to control different aspects of your child's PS4 experience including the ability to set age restrictions on gameplay, limit play time sessions, disabling chat messaging and the ability to access the internet.

DISCUSS PSN RISKS WITH YOUR CHILD

It's always a good idea to discuss with your child how to stay safe on the PlayStation Network and how to respond if people they don't know contact them. Advise your child to report anybody who upsets them or makes them feel uncomfortable and to never share personal or private details or images with anyone online. You can also block other users if they are abusive or your child feels threatened by their behaviour.

SET MONTHLY SPENDING LIMITS

It's a good idea to set a limit on how much can be spent on things like new games, or for skins or card packs in games like Fortnite and FIFA. This can be done using your master family account and then selecting your child's account. Go to Applications/Devices/Network Features from where you should be able to select Monthly Spending Limit and adjust it as you see fit.

IMPLEMENT PRIVACY CONTROLS

Sometimes it's easier to block potential risks at the source when playing online. Through Network Features, you can select whether a child's sub account can communicate with others while on the PSN or whether they can view content created by other players. This means disabling the ability for your child to communicate via chat or messages or displaying and entering comments for friend requests and game invitations. It also means you can block videos, images and text created by other users from view.

SET AGE RATING LEVELS FOR GAMES, DVDS AND BLU-RAYS

As well as controlling what age rating level of a game your child can play, you can also set appropriate controls for DVDs and Blu-Rays. To set this up, simply go through the Family Management setting and then Applications/Devices/Network Features and select the type of content you would like to restrict.

LIMIT PLAY TIME

Play time can also be managed through the PlayStation's parental controls. On the family manager accounts, go to Settings, Parental Controls, Family Management and select the child account you'd like to limit play time for. From here, set a Time Zone, then configure the Play Time Settings to preference.

KEEP ACCOUNTS SECURE

To stop children from changing parental controls and adjusting their own limits and restrictions, you can create a system restriction passcode to disable guest login and set up a log-in passcode so that only you can access your account. To protect against hackers, you can activate 2-step verification (2SV) which will alert you of any new logins. You can also set up a password at checkout in the PlayStation Store so that there is an additional layer of security if anybody attempts to make any unauthorised purchases.

Meet our expert

Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for 5 years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGBible. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.

SOURCES: <https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/get-help/library/my-account/parental-controls/ps4-parental-controls/> | <https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/get-help/library/my-account/parental-controls/online-safety/> | <https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/get-help/library/my-account/parental-controls/play-time-settings/>

www.nationalonlinesafety.com Twitter - @natonlinesafety Facebook - /NationalOnlineSafety Instagram - @nationalonlinesafety

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 13.05.2020

Free School Meals

At this time, many families may find themselves eligible for Free School Meals and Pupil Premium who previously did not meet the criteria. Please read this page carefully to find out if you are now eligible. Our Pupil Premium Parent Guide is being sent home alongside today's newsletter to provide you with more information.

Cornwall Council are continuing to process new applications for Free School Meals. **Please ensure that you read the eligibility criteria before applying** and complete the online application form if you are eligible.

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges/school-meals/application-for-free-school-meals-and-pupil-premium/>

Postal applications are currently not being accepted but, if you are unable to apply online, you can call the Free School Meals team on 01872 323298 and a member of the team will call you back to complete the application over the phone. Please make sure that your phone will accept calls from a private number.

NB All Key Stage 1 (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) pupils are entitled to receive a free school meal as part of the Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) initiative, regardless of what benefits are being claimed. Whilst schools are closed to most pupils during the current Covid-19 pandemic, schools are not required to provide meals or vouchers to Key Stage 1 children who usually receive free meals under the Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme but are not currently attending school.

However, some children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and receiving Universal Infant Free School Meals (as well as all Key Stage 2 children) may have an underlying entitlement to benefits-related Free School Meals. Schools will make arrangements for these children to receive free meals through food parcels or supermarket vouchers.

Your child may be eligible for benefits-related free school meals if you, or the child themselves in their own right, receives any of the following benefits:

- Income Support (IS)
- Job Seekers' Allowance (Income-Based) and equal based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA-IR) and equal based Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (CTC) with an annual income of less than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Guarantee Element of Pension Credit (GPC)
- Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (IAA) Support
- Universal Credit - Your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get) as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods

If you are claiming the benefits listed below you are **NOT** eligible for free school meals, regardless of what other benefits/credits are being claimed:

- Working Tax Credit
- Contribution-Based Job Seeker's Allowance and/or Contribution-Based Employment and Support Allowance

However, you will be temporarily eligible to claim free school meals if you receive a **Working Tax Credit run-on**, which is the payment you may receive for a further four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.

If you think that your child is eligible for Free School Meals, we strongly recommend that you contact Cornwall Council as detailed above.