

Dear Parents and Carers,

I apologise in advance for the length of this piece. I would however urge you to read it as it is important.

In last week's newsletter I set out my hope that in deciding when to re-open schools, policy makers would put the health of children, staff and communities first. I also set out a number of pieces of information which needed to accompany any decision to re-open schools, not least the predicted impact that this would have on infection rates.

As we all know, our Prime Minister announced a range of measures designed to ease the current lockdown including the re-opening of schools on June 1st to Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children. He stated that this re-opening was conditional on a number of factors, although these have not been shared in any detail.

This announcement had been leaked a week earlier in some national newspapers, although the inclusion of our youngest children in the planned return still came as a surprise. I think it's fair to say that the Prime Minister's speech generated more questions than answers.

The Government produced two documents on Tuesday of this week explaining their expectations for the conditional reopening of schools on June 1st. These documents have been poorly received by many educational professionals who have criticised the lack of detail and the absolute absence of any scientific basis on which to proceed with the re-opening process.

Before the school can move forward with any plans for a possible phased re-opening on June 1st there is a great deal of work to be done. The first thing that we have to put in place is a detailed risk assessment in order to determine if it is safe to re-open for more pupils. Unless we are confident that a safe level of risk can be achieved for children and staff to attend school, we cannot open.

We also have to find out from you, **IF** we were to re-open on June 1st for some children, would you intend to send your child(ren) into school. In order to gauge the number of parents who would intend to send their children back if the school re-opens, we will be contacting all parents of Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children very shortly.

What you need to know

Before we can expect you to make any confident decision about sending your child back to school, it seems essential we are absolutely clear and transparent about what we know so far regarding the re-opened school environment and learning experience. The following information is therefore based upon the Government documents referred to earlier and upon the risk assessments we have so far completed.

... cont'd

We know that:

1. It will be impossible to enforce or maintain the 2 metre social distancing expectations in school. Even with the small numbers of children we currently have in as part of our key worker provision, they simply cannot consistently maintain social distance from one another or adults in school. The nature of teaching and learning doesn't easily allow for distance to be maintained in a primary school and it perhaps goes without saying that the younger the children the greater the need for proximity and contact and the greater difficulty of the children understanding the need to stay apart.
2. The Government document makes it clear that staff and children should not wear face masks / PPE, unless a child becomes unwell and shows Covid-19 like symptoms.
3. The guidance sets out an expectation that whatever grouping of children we decide upon, they must not mix with other groups. This means staggered arrival and departure times to avoid contact at the gate, staggered playtimes to avoid contact in the corridors etc.
4. The government have set a maximum of 15 children per year group as their expected figure to return on any given day. This will inevitably mean that there will have to be some sort of rota system for children to attend school on different days.
5. All soft furnishings and toys will need to be removed from classrooms to help reduce the risk of transmitting the virus through surface contact.
6. The classrooms will need to be emptied of most of the furniture and equipment in order to create a 2 metre radius of space around each child.
7. Because we will need to rota teaching staff, we cannot guarantee that your child will be taught by their normal class teacher.

If we are able to open for more children on June 1st, it is clear that this will be a very different school experience to the one that children are used to.

Finally...

Like you, our staff and Governors want the school to reopen and for life to return to normal as soon as possible. We are all working towards this happening when it is safe to do so.

We have worked alongside many of you for a long time and I am certain that you recognise the dedication and commitment that our staff always show in carrying out their roles; more often than not they go far beyond any reasonable expectation I could have of them. Indeed, as well as providing daily home learning provision for each class, they have, without exception and without the slightest complaint, ensured that the school has remained open for children of key workers every day since the national school closure in March including throughout the Easter holiday period.

I make this point because I am aware that some elements of the media, and one or two high profile national figures, are beginning to engage in a divisive and unfair campaign to discredit teachers who have questioned the legitimacy and safety of a return to school on June 1st, which they believe may put lives at risk if not handled properly.

I can assure you that our decision in whether or not to enter into a phased reopening from June 1st will be based entirely on careful consideration of the risks involved and our ability to manage them safely. We will not jeopardise the health of our children, staff and families with recklessness or bravado. Equally, if we are open on June 1st we will respect and support whatever decision you make as to whether or not you send your child to school.

Thanks for your continued support,

Stay safe,

Martin Higgs

Safeguarding Newsletter

All children have a right to be safe and we believe that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. Sent home with this week's Friday News is our termly Safeguarding Newsletter which we hope that you will find informative. This term, we have tried to include things which might be useful for some people at this particular time. It contains important information - please can we ask you to take a few minutes to read it. Thank you.

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

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.

Eco news

Daisy and Mrs England's latest Eco News is attached to this newsletter. It's all about Composting!



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.



NHS 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.



Online Grooming is when someone befriends and builds an emotional relationship with a child and communicates with them through the Internet with the intent to commit a sexual offence. This type of victimisation can take place across any platform; from social media and messaging apps to online gaming and live streaming. Often it involves young people being tricked, forced or pressured into doing something they wouldn't normally do (coercion) and often the groomer's goal is to meet the victim in a controlled setting to sexually or physically abuse them. In some cases children may be abducted or have long-lasting psychological damage.



What parents need to know about

ONLINE GROOMING



CHILDREN ARE MOST VULNERABLE

Unsurprisingly children are often most at risk as they are easy to target and unlikely to question the person who is engaging in conversation with them. Groomers will use psychological tricks and methods to try and isolate them from their families and friends and will often choose to target more vulnerable children who may be easier to manipulate. Predators will stalk apps and websites that are popular with young people and will use a 'scattergun' approach to find victims, contacting hundreds online to increase their chances of success.



LIVE STREAMING CONCERNS

Predators may use live video to target children in real-time using tricks, dares or built-in gifts to manipulate them. Grooming often takes the form of a game where children receive 'likes' or even money for performing sexual acts. Social media channels, such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, all have live streaming capabilities, but there are many apps which children can use to live stream, including Omegle, Liveme, BIGO Live, YouNow and many more.



ANYONE CAN BE A PREDATOR

The Internet has made the ability to interact with strangers online easy. Many sites and apps are reliant on individual users entering their own information when signing up. However individuals can remain anonymous if they choose to enter inaccurate information and many online predator cases are due to groomers using impersonation techniques. However, often the greater threat comes from adults who 'hide in plain sight', choosing to befriend young children without hiding their real identity.



CAN BE DIFFICULT TO DETECT

Unfortunately most children find the grooming process (before any meeting) an enjoyable one as the predator will compliment, encourage, and flatter them to gain their trust, friendship and curiosity – a wolf in sheep's clothing scenario. This often means children fail to disclose or report what is happening. If the groomer is also previously known to the child, their family and their friends, then this can make detection even harder.



FROM OPEN TO CLOSED MESSAGING

Online predators may contact their victims using any number of ways including social media, forums, chat rooms, gaming communities or live streaming apps. Sometimes there is little need to develop a 'friendship / rapport stage', as the victim has already shared personal information online and is communicating openly with others. Children may also be prepared to add other online users they don't know so well to gain 'online credibility' through increasing their friends list. Predators will often seize this opportunity to slowly build a relationship and then move their conversation with the child to a more secure and private area, such as through direct messaging.

EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS

Online predators will use emotive language and aim to form close, trusted bonds with their victims through showering them with compliments and making them feel good about themselves. Often victims will refer to them as their 'boyfriends' or 'girlfriends' and it can be difficult to convince some young people that they have been groomed, often leading to lasting psychological effects.



National
Online
Safety

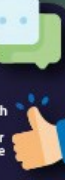
#WakeUpWednesday

Safety Tips for Parents & Carers



IT'S GOOD TO TALK

It's unlikely that you can stop your child using the Internet, nor can you constantly monitor their online activities, but you can talk to your child on a regular basis about what they do online. By talking openly with them about online relationships, they can quickly ascertain the kind of behaviour which is appropriate or inappropriate. Ask them whether they have any online friends or if they play online games with people they haven't met. This could then open up conversations about the subject of grooming.



CHECK PRIVACY SETTINGS

In order to give your child a safer online experience, it is important to check privacy settings or parental controls on the networks, devices, apps, and websites they use. Disable location sharing if you can. If you use location-sharing apps to check where your child is, remember that these could always be used by strangers to follow your child without their knowledge. Ensure that you check options so that location information is never shared with anyone except those they have permission to share with.



MONITOR SOCIAL MEDIA & LIVE-STREAMING USE

It's important to be aware of what your child is sharing on social media and with whom. Create your own profile and become 'friends' with them or follow them so that you can monitor their activity. Similarly, always check on them if they are live streaming and implement privacy controls. Choose a generic screen name and profile picture that hides their identity. You may also feel more comfortable being present each time they live stream.



STICK TO 'TRUE FRIENDS'

Make it clear to your child that they should not accept friend requests from people they don't know and to verify friend requests with people who they do know. Encourage them to only interact and engage with 'true friends' i.e. those friends who don't ask personal questions such as close family and friends. Remind them to never agree to chat privately with a stranger or someone they don't really know and to never divulge personal information, such as mobile phone numbers, addresses, passwords or the name of their school.



DISCUSS HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Talk to your child about what a healthy relationship looks like and how to detect someone who might not be who they claim to be. Explain that groomers will pay your child compliments and engage in conversations about personal information, such as hobbies and relationships. They may admire how well they play an online game or how they look in a photo. Groomers will also try and isolate a child from people close to them, such as parents and friends, in order to make their relationship feel special and unique.

BE SUPPORTIVE

Show your child that you will support them and make sure they understand they can come to you with any concerns they may have. They need to know they can talk to you if someone does something they are uncomfortable with, whether that is inappropriate comments, images, requests or sexual comments.



Meet our expert

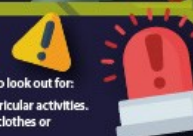
Jonathan Taylor is an online safety expert and former Covert Internet Investigator for the Metropolitan Police. He is a specialist in online grooming and exploitation and has worked extensively with both UK and international schools in delivering training and guidance around the latest online dangers, social media apps and platforms.



LOOK OUT FOR WARNING SIGNS

Child safety experts have identified key grooming patterns and advise parents to look out for:

- Secretive online behaviour.
- Late night Internet or smartphone usage.
- Meeting new friends in unusual places.
- Becoming clingy, develop sleeping or eating problems or even bedwetting.
- Lack of interest in extra-curricular activities.
- Having new items, such as clothes or phones, unexplainably.
- Seem withdrawn, anxious, depressed or aggressive.
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends.



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.