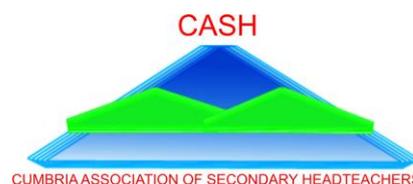


26 August 2020



Dear Parents and Carers,

Returning to school safely in September

The past six months have been unprecedented and the closure of schools put huge pressure on parents and carers trying to ensure their children's education continued at home. Thank you to all of you.

Government policy is that all schools will reopen to all pupils in September. This is good news. But while many children and young people will be looking forward to getting back, meeting friends and restarting classes, we know that some will be anxious about returning. The same may be true for parents and carers.

COVID-19 has not gone away, but the level of infection spread has reduced hugely. We also know now that COVID-19 is not a serious illness for the overwhelming majority of children, and young people are no more likely to spread infection than other age groups.

Therefore the Government's view is that the risk from COVID-19 is now significantly outweighed by the benefits for children's well-being, development and learning of getting back to school. We absolutely share that view.

In line with the national guidance, schools have been working hard over the summer break to make their buildings COVID-secure to minimise the risk of infection spreading. The measures put in place reflect the comprehensive risk assessments all schools have undertaken. They include increased hygiene measures, class or year group 'bubbles', changes to movement around the school and much more.

Different schools will put different measures in place, even in the same local area. There is no one size fits all. This is because all schools are different. Your child's school will explain the measures they have put in place.

If you, or your child, have particular concerns about returning, contact your school next week. In some cases reassurance may be all that is needed, in others there may be additional measures that can be put in place.

There is additional information available at www.cumbria.gov.uk/backtoschoolsafely

We do not know what the future will bring. It is possible that there will be COVID-19 outbreaks that affect schools in Cumbria. We have worked closely with the county's Public Health team and have clear and well-understood arrangements in place to deal with these situations if they arise. If they do, then schools will need the support and co-operation of parents and carers. Please remember that the response to any outbreak will reflect the specific circumstances, once again there will be no one size fits all.

Our aim is simple. We want all children and young people back in full time education so that they can continue with their educational journey. Some will settle quickly and others will need some additional support but this is what our schools do best – meeting the needs of individuals successfully. The curriculum will reflect these needs with a greater focus on pupil's wellbeing and mental health.

Finally, we would like to offer our best wishes to all pupils and their families. We hope you enjoy getting back to school and being involved with all the exciting learning on offer. It really is good to be back.

Yours faithfully,



Dan Barton, Assistant Director,
Education and Skills



Judith Schafer, Chair of the
Cumbria Association of
Secondary Headteachers



Sue Blair, Chair of the Cumbria
Primary Headteachers'
Association