



To All Parents and Carers

Our Ref	MV/KB
If you telephone please ask for Your ref	Mil Vasic
Date	16 th July 2020
E-mail address	Milorad.Vasic@halton.gov.uk

Dear Parent and Carer,

I hope this letter finds you well and that you have not been too badly affected by the impact of lockdown.

Last time I wrote it was to update you on the Government's recent announcement and conditional plans for schools opening to more children and young people. I am pleased to say that the hard work of schools has allowed many pupils from the selected year groups to return. My understanding is that it has gone well; we have had no outbreaks and the children and young people have adapted well and enjoyed their time in school.

The benefit of attending school for children is in no doubt and various recent publications have set out the negative effects of school closures. It has widened the disadvantage gap between poorer children and their more affluent peers. As time has gone on, the more difficult it has become to rely completely on home-learning. Not to mention the time, effort and resources needed to do this consistently well. There have also been concerns about impacts on children's and young people's mental health. Health concerns have also been set out by groups of paediatricians and child psychologists. There is a consensus across all political parties now that a national priority is to get all children and young people back to school in September.

We are now at the end of the summer term and schools in Halton have been making plans to welcome all pupils back in September. Schools now have had experience of making safe use of the school site and devising new plans for teaching and learning now have already completed a lot of work on revising risk assessment documents, planning for the school day and determining how best to ensure staff and pupils can return in September. I can assure you too that working with Public Health all schools already have comprehensive systems in place to deal with any outbreaks or individuals who may test positive for COVID 19.



You will appreciate that there will be specific considerations unique to individual schools, settings and colleges when planning for September. This means that there cannot be a uniform approach across Halton so, as before, your school will be in touch with you to provide more information about their plans for September. I would ask then for your support and patience at this time as schools finalise their plans which are well advanced. We will be continuing to monitor the general Coronavirus situation and will advise schools appropriately as September approaches.

In September, the Government have made it clear that school attendance will be compulsory, and there will be a clear expectation on regular attendance. This will come with the normal enforcement of school attendance via Education Penalty Notices etc.

I do, however, acknowledge that some parents may struggle to successfully reintegrate their children into full time attendance at school for a variety of reasons, and will need support from both the school, health and local authority services. So, if you have any concerns or particular circumstances that need to be discussed please contact your school at the earliest opportunity.

Finally, I hope you enjoy the summer break and I know teachers will be looking forward to welcoming back your children and young people.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'M. Vasic'.

Mil Vasic
Strategic Director, People