



**The Nelson Thomlinson School**  
**Wigton**  
**Cumbria**  
**CA7 9PX**  
*...still "outstanding"*  
**(Ofsted, May 2013)**

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Dear Parents/Carers,

With the most recent daily Government briefings on the BBC mentioning schools re-opening, you have no doubt been expecting some communication from me on the NTS position. There have been numerous reasons for the delay, the vast majority of which have been beyond my control. Thank you for your patience!

You will appreciate that the process of re-opening schools is complicated in normal circumstances, but with the additional problem of the virus, there are many hoops to jump through and risk reduction measures to put in place. We have been working on a plan for a few weeks now, and I would like to share this with you today so that you too can plan ahead.

Please note, however, that **this is dependent on a number of things:**

- Approval by the Local Authority (LA) of their 12-page risk assessment, which we should complete by Tuesday. (We will make this available, probably on the website, as soon as it is approved. I hope the risk reduction measures we are taking reassure you that we are safe to open.)
- Favourable scientific evidence which is due to be reviewed on 28 May
- Sufficient demand from parents (hence the recent survey we sent out)
- Sufficient staff to run the school

The key points for you as parents/carers to take from our plan are these:

### **Week commencing 1 June**

We open our doors to our most vulnerable children but only for brief meetings to take place between them (and their parents, ideally) and their key workers. They are clearly a priority. This will be by invitation only and the families concerned are being contacted.

### **The last six weeks of this term (8 June – 17 July)**

Provided it is deemed safe to do so by the government/LA:

- in week 2 after half term (w/c 8 June) and week 5 (w/c 29 June), we open to **Year 12 ONLY**
- in week 3 (w/c 15 June) and 6 (w/c 6 July), we open to **half of Year 10 ONLY (first half of the surname alphabet)**
- in week 4 (w/c 22 June) and 7 (w/c 13 July), we open to **the other half of Year 10 ONLY (second half of the surname alphabet)**

**In terms of Year 10, we will tell you precisely where the half-way point lies once we have checked how it impacts on the size of each teaching group.**

School will start at the usual time.

Break time will be reduced to 15 minutes, finishing at 11.30am and lunchtime will also be reduced to 30 minutes. This is primarily to stop pupils mixing too much.

Lessons in the afternoon will start at 1pm.

There will be **no canteen food available** and pupils/sixth-formers will need to bring packed lunches.

**School will close at 3pm.** (We may be able to offer after-school provision but this will depend on the extent of the demand.)

There is a lot of detail that sits behind all this (including a whole list of 'rules' – for pupils and staff - and risk reduction measures) but this is the gist.

**You are, according to the Government, under no obligation to send your child into school during this time.**

I would urge you, however, to support our desire to get the pupils/sixth-formers back on track with their learning through meaningful face-to-face contact and communication with their teachers, in the normal classroom environment. It is, in our view, entirely appropriate for the Government to consider Year 10 and Year 12 as a priority; with examinations taking place next year for these year groups, teachers and pupils/sixth-formers will be keen to meet and re-establish routines.

Arranging **Home to School Transport** is still proving to be a major obstacle (hence the recent survey). The LA are still negotiating with bus companies as I write this, and I am hoping that the position will become clear very soon. We expect to go ahead with our plan even if transport cannot be arranged. I will of course update you as soon as possible.

#### **Additional information**

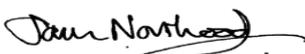
Our plan means that all of Year 10 and all of Year 12 would have 2 weeks 'whole-class teaching/contact/catch-up/face-to face conversation/Q&A' before we break for the summer.

'Halving' Year 10 means that we can restrict the numbers of staff required and restrict the class sizes, and limit the number travelling on buses (if they run!), all in line with the guidance and to enable us all to adhere to social distancing rules. At no point will there be more than c. 120 pupils/sixth-formers in school; this is a mere 10% of our usual roll.

At teachers' discretion, remote learning (for all year groups) would probably need to be watered down during this period to make staff workloads manageable. It is a very great shame that we will not be able to see the other year groups before September at the earliest, but I hope you appreciate the Government's reasoning behind their focus on Year 10 and 12.

**Please do not think that all this plan will definitely go ahead;** if there are too many obstacles in our way, we may have to do something very different indeed. We are working on a contingency plan with the assistance of the relevant Heads of Year and this will only be implemented if the main plan above has to be ditched.

Kind regards,



Mr D S Northwood  
Headmaster