



Downs View

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Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you remain safe and well at home and that all your family and friends are safe too.

I do want to emphasise to you that I fully recognise that this situation of school and college closure is putting an incredible strain on all of our families in staying at home. Despite the slightly more positive figures about infection and death rates we are still as a community in a highly vulnerable situation and treading a fine line between safe and unsafe limited opening at school. Even with limited numbers of pupils attending we cannot manage social distancing in any respect. 'Distance' is not something our population understands as you, our wonderful families, will know.

The SLT and I are reading every single HM Government piece of guidance in detail to ensure that everything we do can be safe for everyone and that we do as much as possible to support everyone.

It remains the case that home is still the safest place for you and your child as there are still very high risks of transmission. My main priority, in line with the Government, is still - **Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives.**

The current position

The Government and others are debating when schools might open but this is still not imminent. We are applying the local authority risk assessment process to support the decision about which referred children/young people may be considered for readmission where safety at home is at risk. We are though also working with Social Care to see what else can be done to avoid children and young people coming to mix together at school which would increase risks overall. I know you are finding the support from teachers very valuable and that will continue. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are constantly in touch with teachers to ensure we are aware of the issues you are facing. Please let us know if there are other things which you would find helpful.

Building works and reopening (whenever it comes)

Unfortunately, the impact of the virus has had an effect on the building development programme. It is now, understandably, behind schedule as the programme has suffered from a loss of workers, difficulties in getting the necessary pre-ordered materials (including plasterboard and windows because companies have shut down) as well as social distancing of the available workforce.



Because of this, the works will not be finished until at least **October half term** and even that may be an optimistic date. It does mean therefore that we **do not have a date for when Downs View Hollingdean** as a school site will close down.

The Governors, Vanessa (new Executive Head) and myself have agreed that whenever Downs View overall starts any kind of reopening over the coming months that Downs View Hollingdean will reopen so that pupils and staff are able to be phased back into a building they know. The Hollingdean children will need to have time to adjust to a building they know first and only once they are settled back, will we then start the transition to Downs View Woodingdean.

This, we believe, will ensure as best we all can, that the potentially devastating effects of this pandemic closure can be supported well by children returning to the environment they know best. I hope also that the children, in knowing this, will feel less anxious about returning to school.

For all other pupils, including the Link and Life Skills Colleges, when reopening comes it will be managed in a phased way to enable all pupils to adapt to being back in education.

Finally, for our leavers (DV Schools Yr 11s, DVLC Yr 14s and DVLSC Yr 17s), we will need to consider some kind of 'do'/prom/graduation when it is logical and safe to do so and Vanessa and the SLT are committed to hold such events to celebrate their achievements with you in future.

Bank Holiday – Friday 8th May

The decision reached by Downs View, Hill Park and the SEMH Hub in conjunction with the local authority is that we will **not be open at all** on Friday for any pupils. As the Bank Holiday has been in place for a very long time we do not anticipate a need for childcare on that day.

Half Term

We are currently reviewing the issue of the half term holiday. There has not been a clear statement from HM Government as yet, even for critical workers.

Finally

Stay at home, stay safe and stay well. I honestly want Downs View to return to 'normal' as soon as is possible because it is important to me, the Downs View staff and certainly you and your children that the vibrant, supportive and outstanding community that is Downs View gets back to business for all our sakes.

Take care,



Adrian Carver
Executive Headteacher

