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15th January 2021

Dear Parents/ Carers of pupils in Nursery Class,

Potential reopening of Nursery to all children

On 4th January, the government informed Local Authorities that, "It is at the discretion of the Headteacher as to whether to open Nursery classes which are part of a primary school," during the current national lockdown. This is the guidance we received and followed making the decision to offer school places to nursery children whose parents are critical workers and children who have been identified as being vulnerable. Since 7th January these children have attended Mersey Vale as part of our EYFS bubble of Nursery and Reception children. By doing this, we ensured Nursery was in line with the rest of our school and high quality remote education has been provided for those families at home.

There has since been a change in government guidance in which it is stated that "...the expectation is that Nursery classes are open to all pupils". We have received conflicting information from different sources and arrangements are being kept under constant review and subject to change. We strongly value the importance of early years learning and development and we know how challenging it may be for younger learners to stay connected to their friends, their teacher and other staff. However, balancing the benefits against the potential risk of children attending is difficult and we are in the initial stages of planning to potentially reopen Nursery to all children.

At Mersey Vale, we strive to work in partnership with parents and carers and we value your views. We ask that you take some time and think carefully before completing an online survey, thinking about your family circumstances, what is right for you and your child at this time as well as considering our Mersey Vale family and the wider community. The outcome of the survey will inform our next steps, further risk assessment and what we may be able to safely offer our Nursery children.

Our key message is the importance of keeping everyone safe at a time of high risk to all. This remains our priority and you will be aware that young children, whilst being at very low risk of becoming ill themselves, can act as vectors for the virus and be a risk to the adults with whom they come into contact. You will also appreciate that social distancing is not possible when working with very young children and Nursery children would be mixing with other children and the staff in their bubble.

For information if Nursery were to reopen but you decide for your child to remain at home you will not be penalised and your child will keep their place. Attendance in Nursery and in the rest of school is not compulsory at present and remote learning will continue to be provided.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support, commitment and understanding during this ever changing and challenging time. Please complete the [following survey](#) by midday on Monday 18th January. There is a space for you to add comments or ask questions and we will do our best to answer them.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Jayne Mullane
Head teacher

Ms Catherine Whitehead
Assistant Headteacher

Miss Kate Bunting
Nursery Class teacher

