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Safe phased returns planned for schools, colleges and early years settings

The safety of pupils and staff is the priority as schools are set to potentially re-open from 1 June

The safety of pupils and staff is at the forefront of planning for a phased return to education, following the Government's announcement that schools may re-open for primary school children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from 1 June - possibly followed by secondary school children in Years 10 and 12 later in the year.

With further Government announcements expected over the next few days, Herefordshire Council is working closely with schools, colleges and early years settings to plan for the potential re-opening of schools to enable more children and young people to continue their education in a safe classroom environment.

Since the lockdown in March, Herefordshire schools have collectively continued to support and educate children and young people across the county, including 800 children of the county's key workers and vulnerable children. This work has been carried out in an ever changing environment with schools, colleges and settings demonstrating their flexibility and commitment by adopting new ways of educating, keeping in touch and supporting their pupils virtually. Many of the schools have remained open during the school holidays for children of key workers and have supported families by distributing food or vouchers.

Councillor Felicity Norman, Herefordshire Council's Cabinet Member for Children and Families said: "We are expecting further Government announcements relating to the re-opening of schools over the next few days. In the meantime we are actively working with schools to plan for these phased returns.

"I would like to reassure parents and carers that if the schools do re-open on 1 June, our priority will continue to be the safety of students and staff at all times.

"We understand that some schools may feel that a return on June 1 is too early and the decision on whether to re-open will be up to each school. This will be dependent on their individual circumstances, pupil numbers, school facilities and whether they feel they have sufficient information to make an informed decision. We will work with schools on a case by case basis, supporting each school in their decisions and we will continue to keep them informed of the latest Government announcements.

"I would like to thank parents and carers for all of the help and support that they have given schools, colleges and early year's settings during this difficult time and we ask for patience and understanding whilst we plan for these next stages."

Ends

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