

ENQUIRIES: Steve Reddy,
Director, Children & Young People's Service.



**Liverpool
City Council**

OUR REF: SR/RB/JJ
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Liverpool Position on School Re-openings

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to explain Liverpool's position on the re-opening of schools. I know that many of you were greatly encouraged by the Mayor's recent position on the re-opening of schools.

I have since written to all headteachers asking that, from **1 June**, Liverpool schools open for key workers' children¹ and vulnerable children² only. **Schools will not re-open to any other pupils at this stage.**

We know some employers will be encouraging people to return to work. But most schools will not be able to open for any other children on **1 June**.

Safe Space Hubs will close on **Friday 22 May**. Children who have been attending hubs will return to their home schools on **Monday 1 June**. **All settings will be closed for the half term holiday to children.** Our hubs have been a real success story. I am sure you would want to join me in thanking everyone across the city who has helped ensure they have run so well.

Our guiding principle is that schools can only re-open to other pupils when it is safe to do so and not a moment before. Only once we can be sure that schools are safe for both children and staff will they be able to open to more children. The safety of your child, and of our staff, is our top priority.

¹ NHS staff; social workers, care workers, health and social care staff and those required to maintain the sector; teachers, specialist education professionals and nursery staff; staff essential to the operation of the justice system; staff involved in the management of the deceased; administrative staff in local and central government essential to the delivery of the COVID-19 response or the delivery of essential public services, such as the payment of benefits. This includes government agencies and arms-length bodies; staff delivering essential public services such as payment of benefits; staff involved in the distribution of food or other key goods; police and police support staff; fire and rescue staff and support staff; transport workers; utilities workers; probation staff; IT staff necessary to support Covid-19 response; payment providers; waste disposal service presumably including refuse collection; armed forces personnel; MoD civilian staff and contractors; National Crime Agency; border security; national security staff; religions and charity staff; journalists and broadcasters; university staff working in a research role to help fight Covid-19 to the list of eligible workers.

² This includes children with an EHCP who have had a recent risk assessment.

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We will not be pressuring anyone to send their child to school since you know your children and personal situation best. Once you have all the information, you will be able to make an informed decision. The government has made it clear they will not be fining parents for not sending children into school during this term. However, if you are supported by a social worker and your social worker advises that your child needs to attend school, it is important you follow this advice.

Some parents have asked me when schools may fully re-open. This will vary from school to school. Each headteacher has to rigorously assess the risks of fully re-opening for their particular school. The size and layout of the school building, and the availability of staff, will affect their assessments. It will be the case that the schools will do it differently. Your child's headteacher will be in touch with you in due course.

I know that the last two months have not been easy. But in troubled times our city never fails to come together and show itself at its best. Parents, carers and families have been a deep source of comfort to our children – even as we have all been dealing with new situations. Thank you so much.

I think many of us have grown further in our admiration for those who work and teach in our nurseries, schools and colleges. We now recognise even more the important role nurseries, schools and colleges play in our lives, and in our communities. They are much more than places of learning! They have become care providers, meal voucher distributors, PPE manufacturers, providers of sanitary products – in short, they continue to be the beating heart of local communities.

But these are unsettling times. We must all keep looking out for our children, and how they are reacting. We must all watch out for their emotional and mental health needs, even if they seem to be coping well for now. My team is working with many professionals across the city to ensure the right support is in place in schools for everyone who needs it.

There is no guarantee to what the 'new normal' will look like in our schools. But I want you and your child to know that when they do return to school, my colleagues and I are working hard to ensure they return to an even better place than when they left. I am unflinching in my commitment that your children – Liverpool's present and future – get the best possible care and education.

Yours sincerely,



Steve Reddy

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