

11/05/2020

Re-opening.



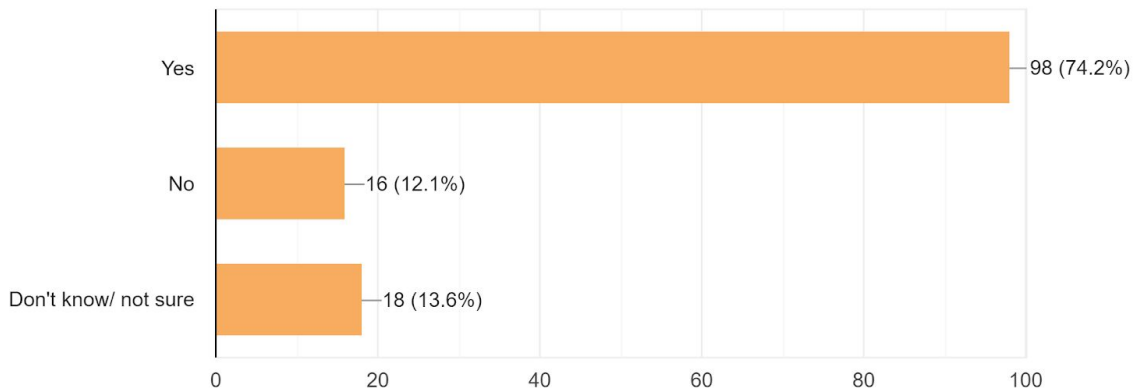
I'm sure like me, many of you will have watched the Prime Minister's address to the nation yesterday evening.

You will have heard the Prime Minister indicating that the government believes it may be in a position to implement a phased re-opening of schools from 1 June, starting with pupils in reception, year one and year six.

This is part of the government's conditional plan which it says will remain under regular review.

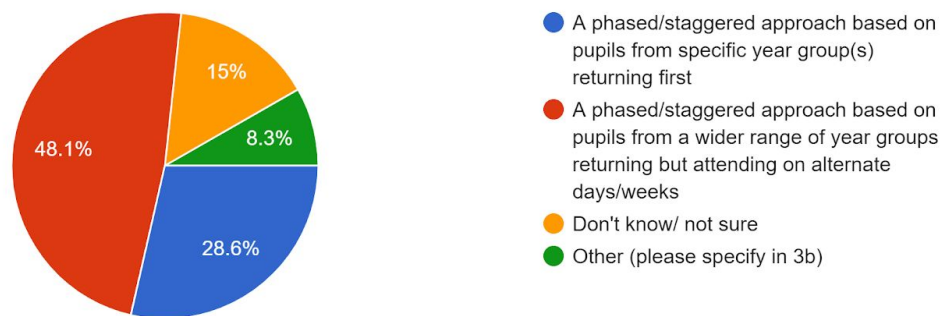
Our parental survey shows the following:

2) When the government considers asking schools to open to more pupils, do you think this should be on a phased / staggered basis? (meaning a reduced number of pupils return initially)
132 responses



The majority of parents support a phase and staggered return, however the majority disagree with the government's approach to reopening schools.

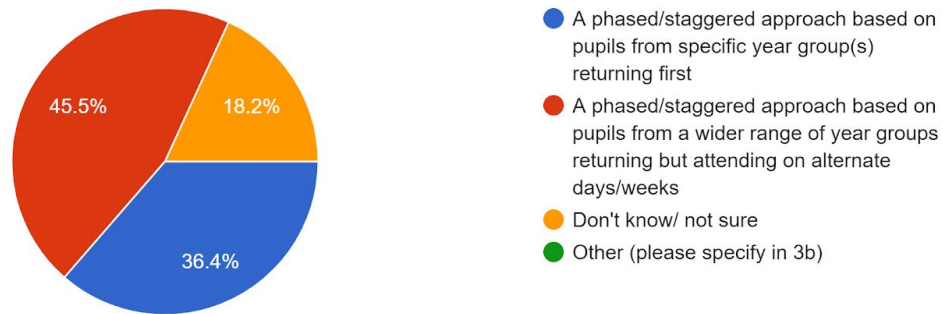
3a) If a future return were to be phased/staggered to limit the number of pupils in school what, in your opinion, would be the best way to achieve this?
133 responses



Nearly half of respondents would prefer a wider range of year groups to return, possibly on alternate days and weeks. This matches the school's position:

3a) If a future return were to be phased/staggered to limit the number of pupils in school what, in your opinion, would be the best way to achieve this?

22 responses



Therefore, I strongly suspect that tonight's announcement will have done little to allay those concerns. If anything, I expect the announcement has only served to increase the anxieties of parents, teachers and school leaders throughout the country.

Let's be very clear, all of us want to get more pupils back into school as soon as it is safe to do so. Our staff have devoted their lives and careers to the care and education of young people – they do not want to see classrooms empty for a day longer than they need to be.

However, as any school leader will tell you, the first priority has to be the safety of everyone in the school community.

The government has told us that their decisions are being led by the scientific evidence. However, to date there has been a lack of transparency when it comes to that evidence. We do not claim to be scientists, but we do think it is reasonable for the government to share and explain the evidence it is relying on, especially when it is basing such vital decisions on it. As of Sunday evening, we are still waiting for that clear explanation.

We have also said that any plan to increase the number of pupils in schools has to be practicable and manageable. Our worry is that, as broadly outlined this evening, the

government's conditional plan may not be either of those things. In many cases it will be physically impossible to bring back the number of pupils being suggested and maintain any sense of social distancing, this is especially the case in infant and small schools.

We also acknowledge the very real anxieties parents and families have at this moment in time. Although the majority of parents acknowledge that schools deal with infectious diseases all the time, they are aware that there already exists a raft of sensible precautions like removing promptly children that show symptoms are already in place. However the evidence people can be asymptomatic carriers in the early stages of infection means there is a need for some pragmatism - monitoring of pupils, quarantining pupils who present with Covid-19 symptoms and the reinforcement of good personal hygiene amongst children and a thorough cleaning regime are vital in ensuring that parental confidence remains high.

Many parents are concerned that their children will contract the disease and are unwilling to return their children to school until assurances are made by the school that their child will not contract Covid-19. It goes without saying that such an assurance is impossible to make - either as a school or as a parent. However there is much the school can do to mitigate these concerns and many of these points will be detailed in a subsequent newsletter.

PPE has been referred to as a means of minimising transmission; however the school has concerns over the effectiveness of such equipment as they could become a breeding ground for the virus and actually increase the risk of transmission. Ryefield will allocate PPE to pupils and staff who are working in a hot zone (where it is believed C-19 may be present): the quarantine room. All other areas will be designated cold zones and the use of PPE is not required. This approach is consistent with that of the NHS and we will continue to be guided by Public Health England. The school is also mindful that there is a global shortage of adequate PPE and we do not have the capacity to verify the effectiveness and cleanliness of every pupil's piece of equipment. We are also mindful that Ryefield would be taking equipment away from the NHS.

Amongst the many measures the school will take to minimise the risk of transmission, all pupils will be required to bring a named and labelled water bottle (as the fountains will be turned off) and a pencil case which must also be named and labelled. The school will provide children with the basics: a pencil and pen etc; however we will not prevent parents from supplying their own stationary if that is their preferred option (no felt pens, the school prefers the use of coloured pencils or crayola twistables).

We are aware that different people will have had very different experiences during the lockdown. Some will have been in school throughout, though for them school will have been a very different place. The majority of children will have been at home and each of them will have had their own experience. It will take time to re-establish and re-learn the expectations of school behaviour and learning. We know that much of learning is based on practice and we will all be out of practice with this.

An interim curriculum needs to be established to compensate for the lack of school based learning that will have taken place during lockdown. Ryefield needs to respond to what the pupils have actually retained and learned, not what they have been given to learn. Learning at home is very different from learning at school and teaching staff will have to realign pupil expectations for learning. The school shall be implementing a Recovery Curriculum. It will focus on 5 levers and the aim is to provide children with the skills, knowledge and resilience to overcome this seismic disruption to their education. We anticipate that this Recovery Curriculum - and a restructured school day - will operate for the next 18 months.

The 5 levers for recovery are as follows:

- **Relationships** – we can't expect our students to return joyfully, and many of the relationships that were thriving, may need to be invested in and restored. We need to plan for this to happen, not assume that it will. Reach out to greet them, use the relationships we build to cushion the discomfort of returning.
- **Community** – we must recognise that curriculum will have been based in the community for a long period of time. We need to listen to what has happened in this time, understand the needs of our community and engage them in the transitioning of learning back into school.

- **Transparent Curriculum** – all of our students will feel like they have lost time in learning and we must show them how we are addressing these gaps, consulting and co-constructing with our students to heal this sense of loss.
- **Metacognition** – in different environments, students will have been learning in different ways. It is vital that we make the skills for learning in a school environment explicit to our students to reskill and rebuild their confidence as learners.
- **Space** – to be, to rediscover self, and to find their voice on learning in this issue. It is only natural that we all work at an incredible pace to make sure this group of learners are not disadvantaged against their peers, providing opportunity and exploration alongside the intensity of our expectations.

At the moment this will be very raw for all of us and I know we will all have strong emotional reactions to what we have just heard.

Operating in a vacuum of governmental information, much has been done to ensure the school is ready for reopening. Markings and perspex screens are in place - or about to be installed in key areas of the school to minimise the risk of transmission. However the reality is that when children return to school it will not be the same - life will be different. There will be a series of rolling changes as we respond to governmental guidance.

I want to remind all of you that Ryefield's staff are still the best placed to make the correct decisions for the school and community. As always, Ryefield stands ready to support its community by accelerating pupils' progress, improving their core skills and developing resilient children.



[BBC Bitesize](#)

The screenshot shows the BBC Bitesize website interface. At the top, the 'Bitesize' logo is on the left, and a 'Change language' dropdown menu is on the right. Below the logo is a navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'Daily lessons' (highlighted with a 'NEW' badge), 'Learn', 'Support', 'Careers', 'My Bitesize', and 'All Bitesize'. The main content area features a large banner with the heading 'Daily lessons are here!' and the text 'School shut? We're bringing you three new lessons every weekday, with videos, activities and more.' A central orange button says 'Start a lesson >'. The banner is decorated with colorful illustrations of houses, trees, and a sun. Below the banner is a section titled 'Learn & revise >' with three colored boxes: a red box for 'Primary' (Age 3 to 11) with a 'Go to Primary >' button, a purple box for 'Secondary' (Age 11 to 16) with a 'Go to Secondary >' button, and a blue box for 'Post-16' (Age 16+) with a 'Go to Post-16 >' button.

Bitesize Daily will run from the start of the Summer term on Monday 20 April 2020. This extensive new offering will include:

[Oak National Academy](#)

The above link takes you to a national scheme to provide additional content for pupils. Daily lessons are a combination of video clips and individual tasks.

The screenshot shows the 'Online Classroom' interface. At the top, there is a green navigation bar with the Oak National Academy logo on the left, the text 'Online Classroom' in the center, and four buttons on the right: 'Specialist' (purple), 'Subjects' (green), 'Schedule' (yellow), and 'Exit' (dark purple). Below the navigation bar, the word 'Subjects' is displayed in large green font with a mouse cursor hovering over it. To the right of 'Subjects' is a link that says 'Switch to schedule view'. Below this, the text 'Please select a year group' is centered. Underneath, there are three main categories: 'EYFS', 'Primary', and 'Secondary'. Under 'EYFS', there is a purple button labeled 'Reception'. Under 'Primary', there are two rows of buttons: the first row has 'Year 1' (light blue), 'Year 2' (light blue), and 'Year 3' (pink); the second row has 'Year 4' (pink), 'Year 5' (pink), and 'Year 6' (pink). Under 'Secondary', there are two rows of buttons: the first row has 'Year 7' (orange) and 'Year 8' (orange); the second row has 'Year 9' (orange) and 'Year 10' (dark blue). At the bottom left, the text 'Or view our specialist curriculum' is followed by a purple button labeled 'Specialist'.





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