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Dear Parents/ Carers

### **Letter 2 re Full opening from 8th March**

Thank you for sharing your feelings about a return to school- both your hopes for what to keep hold of as well as your concerns. Reading them I felt reassured that our thinking in school is progressing in a similar direction to your own. This is predictable perhaps given we have all been through this thing together but is also perhaps indicative of the higher levels of communication about children and learning that this situation has demanded of teachers and parents. This in turn was a common thread in your hopes for the future- that we somehow maintain this higher level of 'collaboration.' It would be wonderful if we could. The risk of course is that we all settle back into our busy lives and our pre-covid defaults which could mean we lack the time or inclination to hold onto all that good communication. I here make a commitment over the coming weeks to work with parents directly to seek out new or better structures to enable/maintain this communication. It will not be without its challenges but we must try because the benefits have been significant.

Unfortunately there is a single, quite negative narrative doing the rounds out there at the moment; a narrative that has our children now hopelessly behind and needing to be rapidly caught up to avoid the calamity of a lost generation. [https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_ngozi\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en) Please see here a fine Ted Talk from a favourite writer, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie- about the dangers of single stories. For us parents this is emotive stuff. Our clear and present mandate is to do the very best for our children and it is hard not to be caught up in the build-up of anxiety well aired by the Media. However, while it has been interesting to note how our emotions have run in parallel over lockdown, there are of course as many individual stories out there as there are people- some people may even have thrived over this period! Of course we all want the children to catch up with stuff they need to know- who wouldn't - but we need to go about this in a sensible and patient manner. Education is not a race. Surely a love of learning should be our aim and this is not best served by the pressure and culture of comparing that comes with a race. This article is worth a read-

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[https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/mar/03/kids-break-catch-up-year-disruption-play?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/mar/03/kids-break-catch-up-year-disruption-play?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

The children in school are a little prickly at the moment. It has not been plain sailing in the building at the best of times but the children's anxiety levels have been on the rise this last week or so. I am sure this will be being replicated at home also as everyone braces themselves for another change in their lives. For my own part much of this is social anxiety. If someone invited me to a party tonight I would go but with faltering confidence. We are social animals and we have been starved of society. Like the children I am mostly desperate to get back to a full school life but there is an illogical but very real part of me that wonders if i still know how to do it. We will be very mindful of the children's social and emotional wellbeing next week and in the weeks to come. We intend putting time aside for socialising and play and expressing emotions; all of which are necessary precursors to good learning.

There is concern that with all the talk of catch up, the children's experience of school will become flatter and more basic. This is not in our make-up and anyway, we want to get back to something approaching a normal school day and a normal curriculum and normal ways of being. We need to get back into a rhythm, back into ways of working that don't leave staff and children discombobulated and exhausted as they were at the end of the Autumn term and also, just as we can't hope to engineer a love of learning without tending emotional health, equally we cannot hope to do so without offering the pupils and staff challenge and stimulation. Where there is catching up to do, we want to do so with the least possible interruption to the day's flow and by utilising some of our brilliant cover teachers to carry it out.

Finally of course, as many of you have pointed out, we must not lose our focus on managing risk. We are not out of the woods yet and none of us in the building want a repeat of the Autumn term's last week or for the virus to spread more freely in the community as a result of our school's opening. We have 'normalised' the timetable but only as far as we think is safe. I would ask that everyone forces themselves to stay vigilant and cautious around others and when dropping off and picking up children. We have less signs, barriers and markings than we once had and a more fluid system for

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getting the children in but its success now relies more on all us using our common sense and continuing to act in the interests of the common good.

Enjoy this weekend and we will see you all on Monday  
Kind regards

Mr Moss

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