



To All Parents and Carers

Our Ref

MV/KB

Date

16th July 2020

E-mail address

Milorad.Vasic@halton.gov.uk

Dear Parent or Carer,

I hope this letter finds you well and that you have not been too badly affected by the impact of lockdown.

Last time I wrote to you it was to update you on the Government's recent announcement and conditional plans about Early Years provisions opening to more children. I am pleased to say that the hard work of Early Years providers has allowed many more children to return. I am pleased to say that my understanding is that the return has gone well, we have had no outbreaks and the children have adapted well and enjoyed their time in Early Years provisions.

The benefit of accessing Early Years provisions for children is in no doubt and various recent publications have set out the negative effects of provision and school closures. It has widened the disadvantage gap between poorer children and their more affluent peers. As time has gone on the more difficult it has become to rely completely on home-learning. Not to mention the time, effort and resources needed to do this consistently well. There have also been concerns about impacts on children's mental health. Health concerns have also been set out by groups of paediatricians and child psychologists. There is a consensus across all political parties now that a national priority is to get all children and young people back to Early Years provisions and school in September (for those who access provision throughout term time only). For those children who continue to access their full day care or childminder offer throughout summer, this is also encouraged for the benefit of children's social and communication skills.

We are now at the end of the summer term and Early Years providers in Halton have been making plans to welcome all children back in September along with meeting new children who are starting provision for the first time. Early Years Providers now have had experience of making safe use of the Early Years provision and devising new plans for learning and development opportunities and have already completed a lot of work on revising risk assessment documents, planning for the session/day and determining how best to ensure staff and children can return in September. I can assure you too that working with Public Health all Early Years providers already have comprehensive systems in place to deal with any outbreaks or individuals who may test positive for COVID 19.

You will appreciate that there will be specific considerations unique to each individual provision when planning for September. This means that there cannot be a uniform approach

People Directorate

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across Halton so, as before, your Early Years provider will be in touch with you to provide more information about their plans for September. I would ask then for your support and patience at this time as providers finalise their plans which are well advanced. We will be continuing the general Coronavirus situation and will advising Early Years providers appropriately as September approaches.

In September, the Government have made it clear that school attendance will be compulsory, and there will be a clear expectation on regular attendance. Whilst accessing Early Years provision is not statutory prior to the age of 5 years, it is highly recommended that Early Years children access their full provision and is beneficial to young children's social, emotional and physical development.

Finally, I hope you enjoy the summer break and I know staff will be looking forward to welcoming back your children.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'M. Vasic'.

Mil Vasic
Strategic Director, People