

18th June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and your family are well in these difficult times. Although lockdown appears to be easing and the infection rate is going down, the ongoing situation with schools and the impact it is having on children's education continues to concern and frustrate us all. There has recently been lots of information on the news and much debate about schools so I wanted to write to you again to update you on our position.

Wider opening of school

Over the last two weeks we are delighted to have been able to gradually welcome more children back to school, although the majority of parents are still reluctant to send their children back, which I fully understand.

The organisation of these groups has been based on responses to the second questionnaire we sent out during our planning stage and throughout, we have followed government safety guidance regarding class sizes and social distancing.

The Education Secretary recently announced that although it will no longer be possible to achieve the government's ambition to open primary schools fully to all pupils for the last four weeks of the summer term, schools can welcome back more children if they can safely do so. However, the guidance he has issued states that schools should only welcome back additional children where 'they do not require additional funding, staff or classrooms to do so'. Unfortunately, many schools, including our own, have little further capacity in terms of physical space, teachers and budget. Most of our classrooms do not have the space to safely fit more than 8 children which means that in the current situation, to accommodate all of our 400+ children we would need over 30 classrooms, which we do not have. With this in mind we are asking:

If your child is in Reception or Year 1 and you would like them to return to school we have limited space available. Please phone or email school by Monday 22nd June to let us know if you would like a space, this will be the last chance.

Home Learning

With only a small minority of our pupils now in school, this obviously leaves many of our children at home. Thank you to all parents who continue to support their children with home learning. We appreciate that this is tough, particularly if you are trying to do your own work from home and juggle family responsibilities in addition to school work with your child. As the weeks go on, we also understand it can be a struggle to motivate children to work at home, and whilst the vast majority of children have been keeping up with home learning, this can never replace the experience of physically being in school.

On our website we regularly put timetable suggestions, learning ideas and links to online lessons provided by BBC Bitesize and Oak Academy, but urge you to contact school via the year group email address or by telephone, if you need any help, advice or additional resources such as paper copies.

September

The Government has stated that they are now working to get all pupils back into classrooms by September. If the number of deaths from COVID-19 continue to fall, we hope that after the summer holidays we will have the opportunity for a normal start to the school year. However, we are waiting

for further instruction and guidance from the government before plans can be made and shared with you.

To support children's return to school in the autumn term and their transition to their new year groups, we plan to have two transition weeks in the first two weeks in July where you will be given a 15 minute slot in our edible playground area. This will be facilitated in groups of 8 and will have staggered times to ensure social distancing. It will be an opportunity for your child to meet their new teacher and access information about the year ahead. We will also be giving pupils their school reports for this year. Further details about these plans will come out to you at the end of June.

I understand that the uncertainty of this whole situation is far from ideal and is frustrating for families, especially those with children who are not currently attending school. Unfortunately, there are many questions about the future that I cannot answer at the moment as it is usual for schools to hear about new government policy at the same time as everyone else - from the news or from the government's daily briefings.

Finally

It is so lovely to have more of our pupils back in school, but we really do miss and continue to care about the children who remain at home. If we were able to bring back everyone safely, we would.

Thank you once again for your support over these last few months during which we have been asked to respond, usually at very short notice, to circumstances that we could scarcely have imagined as we entered 2020. I would like to thank the many parents who recognise how difficult it has been to manage school in the current situation and who have sent their good wishes and thanks to staff.

All staff would like to thank you for your patience as we try to organise everything to the best of our ability.

Best wishes

Kathryn Harvey

Headteacher