



Trottiscliffe

CE Primary School

9th June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly may I thank all those of you who, as part of the phased return, have adjusted your routine to support the school with all the measures that have had to be put in place in order to accommodate more children in school. The staggered drop offs and pick-ups are working efficiently and we appreciate that parents are now not congregating outside the school. Your support has been fantastic in what is proving an incredibly stressful time for all in school.

I am sure, that like me, all parents are looking forward to the day when all children can return to school and normality can return. However we are certainly not there yet, and following the government's announcement today we know that schools will not return to normal before the end of this academic year. Many schools have still not opened fully to Years R, 1 and 6 yet due to the R rate not having dropped sufficiently so I am very proud that our school has managed to take appropriate measures to offer this to our families so far. In fact with the R rate having risen, it is important that we follow all safety guidance to maintain a safe environment for all in school.

We want parents to know we are still very much hoping to be able to offer some kind of return to Years 2-5 before the end of term and it is important that our parents understand that the announcement today has not changed this but this second phase will be reliant on further guidance that we receive in the coming days. It is vitally important to me that all children can have some teaching by their own class teacher in school each week as soon as this is possible but we cannot exceed the safety guidance currently in place in order to keep all children and staff safe. We are missing seeing the other year groups and feel that every year group is equally important and should be entitled to return to school in some way.

In the past 24 hours, as rumour of today's announcement circulated, we have had numerous additional requests for children in other years to return to school. Several of these have come from parents who have not previously indicated that they fulfil the government criteria as key workers, that being:

- work being critical to the national effort for Covid-19
- there not being an adult at home to supervise your child

We will always attempt to accommodate children of critical key workers who genuinely need childcare in order to continue to work as part of the national effort, however if the numbers continue to grow, this will impact significantly on the space we have for other children in the school.

As you are aware we are not allowed to exceed the size of the 'bubbles' in school so we cannot keep adding to these. Likewise, children cannot switch between bubbles so this places some restriction on flexibility of groupings. At our school we can only have four bubbles in school at any time. By admitting additional 'key worker' children we will have to create a new key worker bubble and therefore will have to reduce the year groups currently being allocated spaces in school that have been prioritised by the government meaning Year 6 for example will no longer be able to attend school, then Year 1, then Reception. This will also mean, the plans we still hope to implement for all children to return for some time in school this term, will not be able to go ahead.

Parents should also be aware of the provision for key worker children in school. This group are not being 'taught' in school. They are in a mixed age group of Y2-5 and are supervised to complete the home learning being set by their usual teacher. Therefore there is no academic advantage to children returning in this way, in fact the restrictions on staff being able to work in close proximity with children means that they may be less supported in completing their home learning than they would be at home. Staff are doing their utmost to make this a positive environment and experience for children however it is far from ideal academically

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and therefore should only be accessed by parents who are unable to care for their children at home at this time due to undertaking critical work.

I hope you understand why I feel the need to explain the current situation so that decisions you make can be informed by our school's situation rather than internet rumours. We want you to know that we are still planning on reopening for all children this term in some way but we will only be able to do this if numbers are not breached in school at the moment.

Yours faithfully,

Miss Lucy Henderson

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