



23rd February 2021

Dear Parents,

The Prime Minister has now laid out the Government's route map to take the country out of the current lockdown. As widely reported schools were at the very top of the list, notably primary schools, therefore we are delighted to confirm that from the 8th March, our school will be reopening for all our children.

Our staff will take the remaining days to busily prepare the school for the children's' return. Remote learning will continue, until Friday 5th March, however staff will also be planning for the remaining weeks of term to ensure a smooth transition from remote to school based learning.

This latest period of lockdown has been lengthy and therefore we need to recognise that it is the duty of us all to support the children as they adjust back into expected 'school' routines, expectations and behaviours. Please use the time between now and the 8th March to prepare them, and yourselves, by regularising sleeping habits and ensuring that they take part in as many of the Learning from Home activities and Class Meeting sessions as possible. Learning from the last experience we noticed that many children found rebuilding the stamina needed for the longer school day challenging.

Whilst it may be understandable that parents are concerned that children have been missing out on many aspects of education over the past year, I urge you all to carefully consider the benefit of jumping on the current trend of using the term 'Catch-Up'. Firstly, this places huge and unnecessary pressure on children who have already been through an extraordinary and stressful time. Secondly anybody who honestly believes that a whole year of disruption can be 'caught up' by extending the school day and/or shortening the summer holiday needs to seriously reconsider. We have to accept the fact that the pandemic has disrupted all of our lives. Formal education must of course continue but, as in the context of any year, it is the 'conditions for learning' and quality of teaching (as opposed to quantity) that are the true fundamental elements needed for success. Creating time and space for children to socialise and reacclimatise will therefore also sit with equal importance at the core of our planning.

Equally we also need to remember that the 8th March does not herald a return to normal; it simply gets us back to where we were in September. Most members of staff have not yet been vaccinated, and certainly none of the children have, which means that the risk of infection has not changed. All of the rules set up in September will be retained. Children will be hand washing throughout the day and year groups will remain in bubbles; which of course still remain susceptible to closure as a result of any identified cases. Staff members will continue to regularly test themselves using Lateral Flow Tests, in an attempt to quickly identify and reduce the spread of any positive cases found through this approach. Pick-up and drop-off arrangements will remain as before and we will ask you to continue to wear face-masks in addition to arriving and leaving the site as quickly as possible. If we are all careful and follow the school rules and Government guidance we can hopefully truly begin to rebuild our school community. As with the exit from the last lockdown, this is the part that requires your full co-operation.

Without doubt this has been an unparalleled year. However, your support, the commitment of our staff to the development of remote learning and enthusiasm of our children have shown that when we work together it is possible to make, what at times may have felt 'unachievable', actually 'achievable'.

Thank you to you all.

Yours faithfully

K Keane

Mrs Kate Keane
Headteacher