

Ormesby Village Infant School

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Monday May 18th 2020

Dear Parents

I do so hope you and your families remain safe and well. As promised last week I am writing to you all to explain how we plan to open the Ormesby schools on June 1st to YR, Y1 and Y6 pupils, as well as to the children of key workers. It is important to say, firstly, that the government states that more children will only be welcomed back into school on this date 'provided that the 5 key tests set by the government justify the changes at the time, including that the rate of infection is decreasing and the enabling programmes set out in the road map are operating effectively'. The government will let schools know before June 1st whether indeed they consider their tests have been met, but until we hear otherwise, we will work as hard as we can to be ready to open the schools on this date. The government and the local authority have given schools extensive guidance to follow to ensure children and staff are as safe as possible and we will only open the schools if we have been able to put into place every safeguarding measure that is recommended. It is proving currently very challenging, for example, to procure some of the cleaning products and necessary PPE equipment that we now require, so there may be valid reasons why we cannot open to more pupils on June 1st and we will let you know as soon as we can should this be the case.

With all of our hearts we want to welcome your children back to school and if you choose to send them we will do our utmost to make their time in class as enjoyable as it can be with the stringent safety measures that will need to be in place. However, our heads know that their school days are going to need to be very different and consequently they will be very challenging. The government has stated that 'primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 meters apart from each other and staff' and that the 'hierarchy of measures' schools are expected to follow, explained in the rest of this letter, will reduce what it considers to be a very low risk of spreading the virus. The government has also stated, however, that the risk can never be completely eliminated. We understand that some of you will exercise your choice not to send your children back at this time, some of you will choose to do so – and some of you will have no choice because of your work commitments. We shall respect whatever choice you decide to make and ask that you read carefully about the measures that will be in place before you make your decision. You will not receive a fixed penalty notice if you do not end your child back and we will continue to offer home learning as far as possible given that all teachers will now be back in the classrooms.

The hierarchy of measures listed by the government are as follows, along with the inevitable requirements, and consequences, of them for you and your children:

- Avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms. It is therefore crucial that you do not send your child to school if they display any coronavirus symptoms and that you, or someone else, is always



available to collect them from school if symptoms develop during the day. If your child has an underlying health condition, or lives with someone in your household who is in a vulnerable category, you need to seek medical advice about whether to send them back to school or not. Government guidance states that staff and children do not need to wear face masks in school and that, in fact, it can be dangerous for young children to do so. It also states that it is not necessary for children's temperatures to be taken before they enter school, as a raised temperature may be a symptom of Covid-19, but also a symptom of lots of other illnesses as well. If we need to administer any sort of first aid in school, including taking the temperature if a child becomes unwell, staff will wear PPE as set out in government guidelines. The government has stated that if a staff member or a pupil displays symptoms of the virus, they and their families can now be tested.

- Frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices. We will continue to ensure that children wash their hands regularly during the day, both with soap and water and hand sanitizer. Hand sanitiser will be available in every classroom. Basins in use will need to be restricted to ensure social distancing, so a considerable amount of time in each school day will be taken up with hand-washing. Each classroom and occupied area will have a covered bin for tissues and these will be emptied regularly throughout the day. We will remind children how to wash their hands properly and about proper hygiene practices and signs around the schools will also promote these messages.

- Regular cleaning of settings. We will continue to ensure that all areas of the school are rigorously cleaned and disinfected in line with government/local authority guidelines. Surfaces that are often touched – eg. door handles, chairs, furniture and classroom equipment will be wiped regularly throughout the day. Children will be allocated their own table and chair and they will have to remain at these whenever they are receiving learning in the classroom. They will have to hang coats/bags on the back of their chair, to avoid congestion in corridors near coat pegs. They will have their own tray and equipment, which cannot be shared or used by any other pupil. Doors will be kept open and, weather permitting, windows will be open to allow good air circulation. Whenever possible children will work outside because the guidance states that the virus transmits far less in the open air. Pupils will not have access to the wide range of classroom resources that they are used to enjoying and this will have considerable impact for our younger pupils in particular. Toys and any other shared resources need to be cleaned after each day's use and so will need to be limited considerably to give us the time to do this properly. The guidance states that 'intricate' toys should be removed – eg lego/small world toys - as well as any soft furnishings, soft toys and dressing up clothes as these would need to be washed at 60 degrees between each use, and we do not have the capacity for this. Children will need to be able to respect the requirement not to touch equipment without permission and classrooms will be emptied of excess resources as far as our storage capacity allows.

- Minimising contact and mixing. Government guidance states that children should be put into small classes of no more than 15, with an adult/adults and that these classes should not mix at all during the day as far as possible. To comply with the need to encourage social distancing, desks need to be 2 metres apart and this means that at both schools we will have classes of between 7 and 10, depending on the size of the room. Local authority guidance requires there to be at least two adults in each class to ensure the welfare of children and staff. This will limit the number of children we can have in our schools at any time, so children will need to be offered a place on a rota basis. Children will therefore not be with all of their friends, or have their usual teacher in many cases. We will ensure the classes, or 'bubbles', do not mix during the day by staggering the start and end of the school day and break times and lunchtimes. Once set up by class teachers the pupil bubbles will remain unchanged. At each school, where necessary, one-way systems will be set up to prevent classes mixing/reduce congestion in corridors. Signs will be put up, both inside and outside, indicating entry/no entry routes and marking out 2 meter intervals where appropriate – eg. on the school paths/in the halls/in the corridors.

Clearly, the health and safety requirements that we must put in place will alter the nature of the school day hugely. We will do our utmost to keep your children safe by adhering to the above

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guidance as far as we possibly can. We understand that it will prove very challenging for some children but for everyone's safety we shall expect them to follow teachers' requests. They will not be able to hug each other or hold hands, enjoy their usual playtime games or engage in any physical contact of any kind. Behaviour needs to be exemplary, which is what we always promote and expect. If children cannot follow the social distancing rules as we require them to, we will have to ask you to keep them at home.

We now need to know, having read the above information, if you plan to send your YR/Y1/Y6 child back to school on June 1st if schools open. Please inform class teachers on Class Dojo, no later than this Wednesday, May 20th, of your intentions. It would be very helpful if you would state the reason for not sending your child back, if this is your decision. We appreciate that you may decide at a later date than June 1st to send your child back to school, but we shall organize our classes for the week beginning June 1st based on who is coming back that week. Children who may return at a later date will be allocated to classes as space permits. If your child comes back to school in YR/Y1/Y6 we expect them to attend every day that they are allocated. If you are a key worker it would be helpful to know what days, if any, your child will need to be in school. If necessary priority will be given to children where both parents are

key workers. We will write to you again by the end of the week to give you details about your child's class, drop off and pick up times and other important information to make their return as safe as possible.

Yours sincerely

Lucy Bates

Headteacher

