

Reigate School

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Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to thank you for the ways in which you have engaged with the home learning, I know that your input is essential to helping the children make progress, particularly with our youngest pupils. I also know that many families have experienced great challenges in their lives as a result of the pandemic, whether through bereavement, job loss, illness or the broader day to day challenges of social distancing and balancing childcare with home working. I would like to assure you that the Trust and our school leaders understand the various pressures some of you face and wish to support you in any way we can.

At the start of this crisis there was a real sense of public solidarity and community support. We can all recognise that this has waned over time as we have all become more frustrated with the restrictions, the lack of certainty and even the behaviours of others. I know you will have questions about the school provision moving forward and perhaps some confusion about what to expect, this is exacerbated by vague or even misleading government announcements and media coverage. Mr Alexander and I share your frustration.

We hear the Government announcements at exactly the same time as the rest of the population, there isn't any advanced warning or preparation given to schools. In addition, these announcements always have the promise of 'detailed guidance to follow', which can take several weeks to be issued. Consequently, we are unable to provide all of the answers to your questions as quickly as we would like to, or give detailed plans prior to the guidance regarding delivery of provision.

The list below provides the most up to date information that we have to the most recent questions.

Question

Will the change from the 2 metre rule to 1+ metre mean more children can be in a class?

Answer

No. The guidance states that there is a maximum of 15 children in a class. This change has no impact upon our schools, as classes are at capacity.

Question

The Government has said that all schools have flexibility to invite in pupils who are not returning to school at this time for face-to-face meetings before the end of term. This time can be used to check-

in on pupils and ensure they are supported before a planned return to school from September. What does this mean?

Answer

We are planning to make use of this flexibility by arranging for face to face meetings for all pupils before the end of term. This does not mean lessons. This will be one to one meetings with tutors and is likely to mean the suspension of current Key worker/vulnerable classes for a short period of time to accommodate this. Mr Alexander is providing further details about this.

Question

The Government has announced 1 billion pounds of funding for catch up. Boris Johnson said that this would be provided over the summer. What does this mean for my child?

Answer

The Government has confirmed that schools are not expected to be open for any children over the summer break. The Greensand schools will not be open, other than for the usual summer holiday activities and working.

The 1 billion pounds will not be provided until the next academic year and we do not know how this will be distributed to schools, or the regulations regarding the spending of this additional funding at this stage.

Question

The Government has said that all children will be back in school full time from September. How will this happen with social distancing and will my child be safe?

Answer

The Government hasn't released the guidance for this as yet. It would be impossible to bring all children back into school full-time without the ability to have full classes of the usual size. My guess is that the rule of a maximum of 15 children will be lifted, but regulations regarding keeping to 'bubbles', restricted movement and staggering of times will be in place. I must emphasise that this is my guess, this is not the confirmed guidance. As soon as this is received we will communicate with parents and start putting detailed plans in place.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our staff. This has been the most challenging set of circumstances that I have ever experienced in my 19 years of school leadership. At the start of lockdown, when the country was told to stay at home and only go out if it's absolutely necessary, school staff were expected to ignore the safety risks and come to work. They did so, without question. In the space of three months, we have re-designed the entire functioning of the school three times, responded to Government announcements and managed the logistical challenges to meet requirements and keep everyone safe, whilst ensuring the children receive the best education possible. Our staff have responded to all of this with the same commitment and passion that they always bring to their role and have all worked tirelessly, without respite, since the start.

The teachers had to invent a totally new way of teaching with just two days' notice. Since then, they have made further adaptations and refinements to improve the quality of the home learning provision and their relentless pursuit to deliver the best remote lessons possible continues, with the addition of live tutor times, live and recorded lessons and improved methods of providing feedback.

I would also like to specifically praise all of our support staff. Premises teams, ICT management, Business management, Finance, HR and administrative staff have all continued to fully function throughout lockdown, but with all of the challenges of social distancing that are in place. In addition, there is an army of support staff who have worked both face to face with the children in school and made hundreds of phone calls home to provide support remotely. Everyone has had to adapt the ways in which they work and undertake tasks that they wouldn't usually do to keep our schools running and educate our children. They have reacted swiftly and collaboratively to all of the challenges this crisis has created. The governors, Mr Alexander and I have, at times, been overwhelmed by their generosity of spirit and are proud to lead this team.

Finally, my thanks to the parents who have taken the time to contact the school with messages of gratitude and support. I know that these messages have a hugely positive impact upon staff morale. Please keep them coming, they really do make a difference. We are grateful for your continued cooperation and are looking forward to the day when our school will be full of children again.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Wardlow', written in a cursive style.

Sue Wardlow
Executive Principal