



South Avenue Primary School

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Dear Parents & Carers,

I hope that you continue to be well and are enjoying the weather, well the sunny times anyway.

I am sure that you are aware of the many changes that have occurred over the last few weeks which have come from the Secretary of State for Education and our Prime Minister. They have confirmed that schools will not be open to any child over the summer holiday period, that there is not the capacity to have all children return to school prior to the summer holidays, they have spoken about additional funding being given to help reduce the gap in children's learning and the possibility of tutoring children throughout the summer holiday to name just a few things. As a school we are constantly changing our plans to ensure we keep the pupils and staff safe. As a result of the continuing changes and challenges, we (myself, the staff and our governing body) are considering what this means for us here at South Avenue Primary School.

In the last few months we have been asked to respond, usually at very short notice, to circumstances we could scarcely have imagined as we entered 2020. As you know, detailed risk assessments have been put in place following the strict Government guidelines, to redesign and reorganise our classrooms and other learning spaces in school to ensure they are safe for those children and staff returning. This has involved emptying classrooms of furniture to enable social distancing, sectioning off areas of the school and playground/outdoor spaces and acquiring sufficient PPE and cleaning materials. Revised timetables were drawn up to allocate staff to bubbles as well as organising time and opportunity for them to continue to provide online learning through SeeSaw. We were, of course, committed to doing all of this and more and thank the governing body and you, the parents, for your support in delaying the start until this was in place and the school was as safe as possible, following guidelines, for your children to begin to return.

Since 8th June, when we started increasing capacity for key worker and vulnerable pupils and invited children from Year R, Year 1 and Year 6 back, we have seen a steady increase in children returning.

We now have all children who requested a space in school. We will continue to review the measures we have put in place and amend them if necessary. Clearly, if anything needs to change we will inform you of this in due course.

I am sure that you are aware that the Secretary of State for Education finally clarified the government's position regarding the full opening of primary schools for a month before the end of term. He has accepted that most schools (particularly primaries) do not have the capacity, in terms of both physical space and teachers, to welcome back all students.

At present, because of the physical size of our school, and the structure we have planned for the groups who have already returned to school, along with the expanding number of children requiring our key worker provision, I have to be honest with you and say that, unfortunately, we currently do not have the capacity to take any more children at this time. We will continue to keep the children at a distance of 2m whilst inside the classrooms to help reduce the risk of transfer of the virus.

We understand that this situation is far from ideal and is frustrating for both yourselves and more importantly, your children. You, and they, will have many questions about the future, some of which we cannot answer ourselves at the moment, but we are currently making decisions and arrangements to try and facilitate some transition time so that ALL children can come into school for a transition meeting with their new teacher for September. Once plans have been finalised we will share this information with you.

Collaboration, Challenge, Community, Courage, Commitment, Creativity

As a staff, we all feel concerned for the children who remain at home. We know that the vast majority have been keeping up with their learning in the virtual classrooms, but this can never replace the experience of physically being at school. If we were able to bring everyone back safely, believe me we would do it. When we do all return, learning will be developed to help fill any gaps that have occurred during this time.

As yourselves, I await the next announcement from the government to find out what arrangements for September will be and how this will look for us. Thankfully, the number of new infections and deaths from Covid-19 continue to fall at present, so we are hopeful that September may bring the opportunity for a normal start to the school year but we can only, like you, keep our fingers crossed at this stage.

At present school will close for the summer to all pupils on the Wednesday 22nd July 2020 at 1:30pm. We plan to return for the new year on Thursday 3rd September 2020 for Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

For all those of you that we are not able to welcome back just yet, I would like to let you know that you are missed and we have posted a video on our website for you to watch, so please visit our website or use the link below to see the adults that miss you all dearly.

<https://www.southavenue.kent.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=1&storyid=18>

Warm regards



Miss T Cadwallader
Acting Head of School