



Kells Lane Primary School
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22 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

URGENT STATEMENT FROM THE GOVERNING BODY OF KELLS LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Firstly, please accept our warmest wishes to you and your family. We know you have faced significant challenges during the past two months. The staff and governors at Kells Lane are grateful for your continued patience and support.

Thank you for completing our recent survey. Many of you have indicated that you **do not** wish to send your child back to school. We respect your decision and can reassure you that no further action will be taken if you make this choice. Our home learning offer will remain in place for all children.

Please be assured we want nothing more than to welcome all of our children back to school and return to 'normal' life. However, you will also appreciate we have a duty to make sure the children and staff are safe.

In making our decision to reopen the school, we have taken into consideration the following key issues:

- 1. The health, safety and wellbeing of our children and staff**
- 2. All guidance from the Department for Education**
- 3. Statutory health and safety legislation**
- 4. A range of practical issues such as available teaching space and staff deployment**

The government would like children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to return to school on 1st June. Kells Lane simply cannot safely accommodate this. The government guidelines state that children should now be taught in smaller groups of no more than 15. Our classrooms, when set up to comply with social distancing measures, at a minimum of 2 metres, can only accommodate a maximum of 10 children. Therefore, if 180 children return to school on 1st June, we do not have enough classroom space or staff to facilitate this.

The DFE guidance suggests that social distancing with young children is no longer expected. However, the governing body believe there is limited information regarding transmission of Covid-19 between children and adults. In this respect, the governing body must comply with all health and safety legislation for both children and staff.



'Believe, Work Hard, Achieve'



The government also requires schools to continue to prioritise childcare for children of key workers and vulnerable children. Kells Lane has a high number of parents who are key workers. We are expecting the number of children accessing this provision to increase in the coming weeks.

It is generally agreed that Gateshead has one of the highest transmission and infection rates in the country for Covid-19. We are, therefore, cautious about bringing large numbers of people together in a confined space for a number of hours. Although this position may be improving, the situation remains fragile.

In order to open Gateshead schools to increased numbers of children safely, Headteachers have agreed that the initial date suggested by the government of 1st June is too early and, instead, have set a date of 8th June, at the earliest. However, we must stress this is still subject to the governing body being satisfied that it is safe to do so.

From 8th June 2020 – Year 6 children can return to school (9.30am to 2.30pm)

Please do not arrive at school before 9.20am to allow for social distancing with key workers and their children.

The success of this initial phase will be continuously reviewed over the first two weeks.

Following this review, additional year groups may be invited to attend. However, we need to be completely transparent with you and say it is unlikely.

This will depend on ongoing risk assessments, health and safety considerations and availability of staffing and classroom space.

Children of key workers will continue to access our emergency childcare provision.

These plans have been approved by the Governing Body of Kells Lane Primary School.

It is important we are open and honest with you about what school life will be like for children in the coming weeks. Please see below for a list of some of the new arrangements to be aware of:


- The start and finish times of the school day will be staggered to allow parents and carers to observe social distancing rules in the school grounds and pavements outside school.
- Children will be taught in groups (sometimes referred to as bubbles) of no more than 10.
- These groups will be organised alphabetically, this means that children will not necessarily be with their friends.
- Children will be taught at socially distanced individual tables (at least 2 metres apart).
- Children will not necessarily be taught by their usual class teacher.
- Most children will not return to their usual classroom.
- It is necessary for children to wear clean clothes to school every day; we are therefore relaxing our uniform policy to accommodate this. School uniform is not required.
- Children will not be permitted to bring any items from home except a packed lunch and a water bottle. We ask that the packed lunch is in a disposable bag rather than a lunch box.
- School packed lunches will be available. However, all payments must be made online and in advance.
- PE will be restricted to allow for social distancing.
- Lunch will be taken in the classrooms and outdoor playtimes will be on a rota basis. The children will only be permitted to socialise within their group/bubble.
- Our behaviour policy has been updated in light of social distancing rules. All children must be able to follow the instructions of the adult supervising their group/bubble at all times.
- Handwashing and cleaning of equipment (e.g. desks, pencils etc.) will take place at regular intervals throughout the day.

- Parents will not be granted access to the main reception area. All messages or queries will need to be communicated to school via email or telephone.

This is not an exhaustive list and we will continue to update you with additional information in the coming days and weeks.

We understand it is difficult to recognise our school from the information and description above. We are hopeful these changes are temporary and that we will see a return to normal life at Kells Lane Primary School in the near future.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs A Whistler
Headteacher



Mr M J Hetherington
Chair of Governors