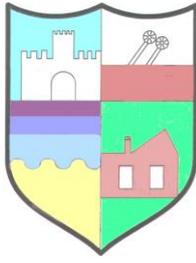


ELLINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL



Education without Compromise

Headteacher: Mr K. Vardy B.Ed ADE Warkworth Drive, Ellington, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 5HL

Telephone: 01670 860769

Fax: 01670 862940

Email: Admin@ellington.northumberland.sch.uk

www.ellingtonprimaryschool.co.uk

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Dear Parents and Carers,

I know that you will be continuing to follow the government's advice on how we can all play our part in the control of COVID-19 and I thank you for your support in doing so, which has included keeping your children at home wherever possible.

Since 23rd March, we have been caring for the children of key workers who have not been able to work from home and vulnerable children who really do have to be in school. We envisage that in the coming weeks this childcare provision may need to be extended as more of the key workers on our priority list are expected to leave their homes to return to work.

As you know, the government announced earlier this week that they are phasing in changes to the way our country deals with the ongoing threat of COVID-19. This included stating that schools **may** open to more children, in addition to vulnerable children and the children of key workers, from 1st June at the earliest. As parents and carers, you will of course make the ultimate decision on whether you feel that it is safe for your child to return to school and will not be penalised for non-attendance during the ongoing crisis.

Since this announcement, guidance is changing on a regular basis with regard to what a phased re-opening of schools may look like and I am now planning with Governors and the Senior Leadership Team how we can safely open school to larger numbers of children from the priority groups outlined by the government, which are Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. This includes the completion of a detailed risk assessment that takes account of all guidance that has been provided by The Department for Education, Northumberland County Council and Public Health England. The risk assessment covers many aspects that include vulnerability of children, availability of staff, pupil /adult ratios and groupings, reduced class sizes and social distancing, school meals, safe drop off and pick up of children, cleaning regimes and availability of PPE and cleaning materials.

If school is opened for more children in the near future it will certainly present many challenges. The children for example may not be taught by the same teacher or teaching assistant, they may not be taught in the same classroom and they will not be able to mix with children outside of the small group within which they have been placed. There will also need to be strict hygiene rules in place and a significant limitation on activities in which the children are involved and resources that they have access to.

In the meantime, teachers will continue planning and presenting learning opportunities for all children at home and I will keep you updated via the school website.

Whilst we are anxious for all of our children to return to school as soon as possible, I can assure you that any decisions that we make will be made with the safety and wellbeing of the children, parents, staff and the community at the centre.

Thank you for your continued support during this very difficult time.

Yours sincerely,

Mr K Vardy
Headteacher