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1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

We hope that the home learning has gone well today and that the resources and staff have made life easier for you. Please do message your teachers on Dojo or by email and give them feedback so we can tailor this to help you all.

We have been busily preparing for some reception, year 1 and year 2 children to return to school this week. We have had a staff briefing today and have ensured the classrooms are set up safely ready for some children to return tomorrow.

All along we have been cautious in our approach as we want to keep children, staff and families as safe as possible as far as we are able to control.

The government have been very clear in stating that schools would only re-open once the five key tests could be met.

The PM made his announcement last Thursday that those 5 tests had been met. He announced that schools would 'reopen' from today and he also announced a number of other measures to start relaxing the lockdown.

However, over the weekend new information has come to light:

1. The government admit we are still at Level 4 - 'transmission is high or rising exponentially' (for schools to return it should be at level 3 'the virus is in general circulation'). This was not made clear on Thursday.
2. Their own scientific advisors (SAGE) have stated that there is a significant risk to relax the lockdown at the present time. Four prominent members of the Government's own scientific advisory body have broken ranks to express worries about the safety of wider primary school opening on 1st June. SAGE members Professor Peter Horby, who is chair of the Government's New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG); Jeremy Farrar, director of the Wellcome Institute; John Edmunds, professor of infectious disease modelling at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Calum Semple, professor in Child Health and Outbreak Medicine have all expressed fears about the easing of lockdown.
3. The Independent SAGE group (led by a former Government Chief Scientific Advisor) feel that too much is being relaxed at the same time and recommend waiting until June 15th.
4. Last night senior public health officials (Association of Directors of Public Health) lobbied the government to delay the easing of lockdown.
5. We also know that test, trace and isolate is not fully operational. This was seen to be an important strategy to be in place for when we moved out of lockdown. On the BBC Radio 4

Today programme, Professor Horby agreed with Professors Edmunds' and Farrar's concerns, saying that SAGE has always been very clear that test, trace, isolate must be fully running BEFORE lockdown is relaxed. The system needs to be tracking most new cases, he said, following them up within 48 hours.

6. Professor Horby added that SAGE does not have a good handle on the role of children and schools in transmission and stated that returning to another lockdown would be much worse than delaying another two or three weeks until contact tracing is fully up and running. Professor Edmunds said 'There are still 8,000 new infections every day in England without counting those in hospitals and care homes... If you look at it internationally, it's a very high level of incidence.'

We are not medical scientists, nor are we politicians. But we do feel that we are now piggy in the middle between them. This puts us in a very difficult position. We feel that we should continue to be guided by the science and the science suggests we should remain cautious.

Whilst we feel we can manage the two bubbles totalling 18 children given the measures we have in place. We do not feel that we are able to agree to any additional children forming a third or fourth bubble. This will be under constant review over the next week or so and we will write to you again to see if any of you wish for your children to attend school from the 15th June. It will be very likely this would be a part time offer.

When we planned for the return of the priority year groups, we did not factor in the other changes that the government would announce. Whilst we remain at Level 4, we would now rather wait to see what effect the relaxation of lockdown in society has on the R number and the infection rate.

Obviously, we are relying on our families to be abiding by the Government's guidance and following social distancing rules otherwise if and when your children return to school they will be putting staff and other children, and their families, at risk. We are receiving reports of school families who are breaking rules (car sharing, multiple children playing together on the streets and in gardens) and this concerns us greatly.

We will continue to update you as and when we have more information and guidance.

Best wishes

Claire Jackman and Holly Miles