

11th June 2020

Dear Nursery and Reception Parents,

I am writing to you to tell you that we now know that it is not going to be possible to invite your children back to school before the Summer break. We are only able to confirm this now as we have been waiting to find out exact numbers for year 1 and whether the government would change the guidance to make it easier to accommodate more children. I know you will be very disappointed, as are we, but we are very restricted by the government guidelines that we have to follow. We also put the safety of our Kilmorie children, their families and staff at the centre of our plans. I would like to explain the logistics to help you understand the reasons. We are not averse to the challenge and have a higher number of children attending Kilmorie than most schools in Lewisham, but we have reached a point of capacity.

Since the start of lockdown we have remained open for both vulnerable and key worker children including holidays. Over the last 2 weeks we have increased the number of children in school significantly (key worker and vulnerable children) and we have organised the children into 'bubbles' as directed by government guidance. Bubbles must have no more than 15 children and in year 6 because of the size of the children within the spaces we have had to limit bubbles to 10. There are now 90 key worker/vulnerable children in school full time (and have a long waiting list) and 70 year six attending 2 days a week and 60 year one children starting 2 days a week from Monday. The year 6 children and the year 1 children are not all in on the same days as we have to keep bubbles separate at all times and that includes managing all the communal areas, including toilets, lunch halls and playground areas. Dropping off and picking up times are staggered to ensure not too many adults are in the playground or using the entrances at the same time. Rooms have been stripped of soft furnishings and have very limited resources and minimal furniture. This is a hugely challenging logistical operation to manage but we have worked hard to make it work. Staff can only be deployed to one bubble so we cannot rota staff into another bubble on other days as this defeats the point of having a bubble.

The two main reasons we are not able to take Nursery and Reception is that we do not have enough staff left and we cannot have further children using the communal areas. Staff are eager to bring the children back and are all involved in the phased return. There is a very small number of staff unable to be in school as they need to shield however they are still contributing to the remote learning and helping in many other ways. Some parents have contacted us to tell us how other schools are managing the phased returns. All schools have been instructed to make their own plans as each school has different logistics to consider. We are in contact with schools across Lewisham and we are aware of how other schools are managing this and it is not dissimilar in other local schools. In fact we have chosen to start our phased return sooner than many and we have a significantly higher number of children in school than other schools.

After the government announcement yesterday that all children will not be returning to school (we only get this information when the general public d) we are now looking at further ways to support you at home and to connect with the children. As you know class teachers are now making calls from school each week; they may not get to call everyone on their specified day but will make contact at least fortnightly. We are building on our teacher videos and are looking into other platforms for connecting. We are in the process of planning ways of introducing the children to their teachers for the next academic year. This week a new email system has been set up so that you can email teachers directly (instructions will be sent out shortly). The remote learning planned by class teachers will continue to be updated every week on the school website.

I hope that this information at least helps you to understand why we cannot accommodate your children. Please know that we are also frustrated by the situation and understand how difficult this must be for you. We will continue to do all we can to support you but we cannot change the situation.

Please do continue to ring or email for advice on how to support your child.

With best wishes



Liz Stone
Head Teacher