

21 May 2020

Dear Parents,

I apologise for the length of this letter but I feel that whichever class your child/ren are in it's important to appreciate the complex and interconnected challenges we face as a school community as these impact upon our decisions.

Since writing to you on Wednesday this week, regarding the decision to adopt Cheshire East's delayed and phased return I am now in a position to provide you with more detail. The consensus from Headteachers, Governors and Trustees nationally is that we all want children to return to school as soon as it is safe to do so but the date of 1 June was too soon. The guidance provided to schools has changed no less than 41 times in a week. The Governors of Egerton and the KMAT Board of Trustees, who make the final decision regarding the plans for the school, met and agreed that this approach provides more time to adopt a more measured and phased return for the children in those identified groups.

The phased return spans just three weeks to welcome Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children back. This enables the youngest children to reconnect with the school and daily life as well as building on those important aspects on learning in the early years, which will affect their future. This is so very different for them, which is why they have been prioritised in the phasing of this return.

At every point in this situation, the safety, health and wellbeing of your children has been the principal factor in planning.

**It is important to point out that this is only an adopted plan that it may change depending on any announcements from the Prime Minister and follow on guidance from the DfE.**

### **Strict Guidance**

The guidance since the Prime Minister's announcement on 10 May has been relentless, very different, and more detailed regarding the protocols schools need to work to than prior to the 10 May. This is especially the case regarding social distancing, health and hygiene, safety regarding equipment, the learning environment and, in particular, how children are grouped.

### **What will daily life at Egerton be like?**

Below is just a snapshot of what is involved to prioritise the health, safety and wellbeing of the children. These arrangements are based upon what is currently known about this virus:

- Children will be grouped within their Year groups. The size of the group will be dependent upon what is safe for the size of each designated room. Each class will have at least two groups, which means some children will not be with their class teacher and not in their usual classroom.
- We remain on standby daily for the children of key workers. However, given the change in the guidance this does affect groupings – please see below.
- Children's drop off and collection times will be staggered, the school day is likely to be from 8.30am until 3.15pm. A prompt arrival and collection will be expected to ensure minimum contact with others and social distancing is critical when approaching the site. A schedule will be provided.
- There will be a clear 1 way system in place to reduce contact throughout school
- We will not be able to offer before and after school club as this would involve mixing groups of children.

- Parents/carers will not be allowed on site at any time. Members of staff will receive children from a safe distance at each entry point. Only one adult per household to drop off and pick up.
- Safety guidance states that children and staff are to wear different clothes each day. Therefore, uniform can be worn but also other practical and appropriate clothes too.
- Each class will be split into learning “bubbles” of no more than 15 and most likely less due to the size of our classrooms.
- Each group will be based in their own learning space at all times. For a number of children this will not be their normal classroom. Your child will not be taught or socialise at school with anyone outside of their group at any time including at play and lunch times.
- We will be making use of the outdoor space as much as possible but this will be in zoned areas. Groups will not come together and social distancing will need to take place within a group too.
- Children will not all be taught by their usual class teacher or teaching assistant. Each bubble will be assigned a member or members of staff and these adults will remain with them for the coming weeks until the end of the term, or until the guidance for this changes.
- Play times and lunch times will be staggered to avoid contact with other children and members of staff. Each group will be assigned a particular outdoor space to use at a specific time.
- A school lunch will be a Cat Bag, as is the usual and very popular offer at this time of year. These will be delivered to each room.
- Children in Y1 and Y6 will have their own table and this is where they will remain at all times in the classroom. Their coats will be placed on the back of their chairs and if they bring a lunchbox this must remain on their table too. They will have their own equipment, which will stay on their tables and, as far as is practicable, they will not share equipment. All equipment and furniture will be cleaned regularly throughout the day. Adults will move around the room to support children at a 2m distance but children will be encouraged to stay in their place.
- All books and paper used by the children will remain in school.
- Children should not bring anything into school other than their coats, PE kit and lunch if they bring their own.
- All equipment will be cleaned regularly throughout the day. Soft furnishings, fabrics and equipment with small intricate pieces will be removed before the children start their first day.
- Each group will be assigned one toilet area with only one child to use at any one time. Movement around the school building will be restricted to ensure children do not come into contact with others in a different group.
- Children will remain in their groups to eat. This will take place in their room or outside when weather permits.
- The learning activities that will be delivered will be the same as those on the website for remote learning as well as spending as much time as possible outside either doing PE or other activities, whilst maintaining social distancing.

#### **Health and Hygiene:**

- Children will wash hands regularly using soap and water or hand sanitiser at least 6 key points in a day and more if necessary following specific activities.
- Children will wash hands on arrival at school and immediately before they leave.
- Doors and windows will be open as much as possible for good ventilation.

- We will clean/disinfect toys and surfaces throughout the day. Gates and door handles, phones, ipads etc.
- If any children or members of staff display symptoms they will be isolated and sent home. They will then need to self-isolate for 7 days and their family for 14 days.
- Any child or member of staff who display symptoms are eligible for a test.
- At the end of each day the school will be deep cleaned.

### **Key Workers**

We will be open to welcome the children of key workers from 1 June. However, once a child is assigned to this group they have to remain in that group until the guidance regarding this were to change. This obviously has consequences for those key worker families who have Reception, Year 1 or Year 6 children. If they were to return from 1 June they would not be able to move to a class group when those year groups are reintroduced on 15th, 22nd or 29th June.

I have sought further advice from the DfE and they have confirmed this is the case.

### **Year 6**

Early, in these very difficult times, I did say that I would prioritise Year 6 in returning to Egerton. I did that in good faith but now I accept that was pre-emptive and naïve given the consequential rapid spread of this virus, the resulting national lockdown and now the very strict protocols as outlined above.

The very youngest children are going to find this very difficult and they will need significant support and time to readjust to this quite alien experience. They also need the expertise of our staff in supporting them with their wellbeing and learning. In the time span of just 3 weeks of phasing this would give the youngest children time to acclimatise and just 2 weeks later Year 6 would join us.

We wanted to give you a clear and honest view of what the learning opportunities might look like for the duration of their time at Egerton.

The lessons will centre primarily around their transition to High School. They will have opportunities to explore their journey so far, including their achievements and favourite memories. They will then move onto exploring their feelings about moving to Secondary school and look at some of the practical aspects: timetabling, staff, subjects, clubs, equipment etc. The children will have a transition booklet to complete which will aid their move from Year 6 to Year 7.

The children will also continue to develop their knowledge and skills in all subjects: including maths, English, science, etc. to ensure they are prepared for the Year 7 curriculum.

The lessons in school will be replicated (as much as possible) as part of home learning, therefore if some children do not return, they will still have access to everything mentioned above.

We also feel it is important to replicate as many of the Leavers' events as possible as these are so important for the children. Therefore, we still want to try and create a version of the Leavers' Assembly. We are currently discussing ideas about this and will give more details to Year 6 parents after the half term holiday.

We will also ensure that we will try to arrange a presentation evening, as well as an opportunity for the children to sign shirts, play the annual game of rounders against family members, and say goodbye to Reception Class. We can't currently confirm or plan these event due to the current social

distancing guidelines. As soon as we can arrange them, or an adapted version of them, we will. This will probably be early in the Autumn term.

Whilst learning, children will be split into 2 or 3 groups/bubbles. The children will remain strictly in these bubbles until the social distancing guidelines are lifted or altered. These groups will not be able to spend time together and they may not even see each other throughout the day or be on site at the same time. It is also, with regret, that the children might not be in a group with Miss Capper, but they will have the same teacher or teaching assistant for the duration of the three weeks, (unless circumstances change). We are working with Knutsford Academy to look at ways of using the Westfield Drive Site, possibly in their final week.

We will also have in place a number of new classroom structures and we will inform the children of these prior to returning to school. We want to make sure the children feel as comfortable as possible with their new learning routines and are familiar with their new learning space. The children might not be in their original classroom and the layout of the classroom will look different.

We are incredibly sad that the children will not have the end of Egerton journey they have wished for or the one that they truly deserve. We will do our utmost to ensure they do have opportunities to make so many memories, whether this is before July or in September/October. Please bear with us and we will do our utmost to support them through this difficult challenge.

### **Children in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5**

Children in Y2, 3, 4 & 5 whose parents are not considered key workers do not get a school place at this time. I would like to thank those parents from these classes for their amazing support. I have received numerous supportive and appreciative emails regarding home learning. It is now more likely than ever that these children will not return to school until September at the earliest.

### **Remote Learning**

Our approach at Egerton has been clear and strong from the outset. This will not change. Remote learning and learning in school will be the same activities. Obviously, teachers will now be in school teaching the numerous groups we will have, which will be in excess of 7 groups. This means that the feedback they were giving on Seesaw and Tapestry is just not possible. We do appreciate that parents are continuing to work at home so please just do what you can and when.

### **Long term future**

This is even harder to predict. The challenge presented to schools with a maximum of 15 children in each bubble means that rooms will very quickly be taken up in a school. At Egerton we cannot safely accommodate 15 children in any room so groups will be smaller. This means at least doubling the number of rooms and staff that we normally operate with.

### **Next steps**

A new electronic form will be issued after half term for all parents of key workers, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 parents. It is the decision of the parents whether to send their child to school in these circumstances and there will be no penalty for not doing so.

I will write to you again on 1 June with more details, especially if the guidance were to change from the government. This letter will contain the link for the new form.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your continued support, understanding and deep appreciation for the Egerton Team. There were some wonderful messages and videos shared on Wednesday for Thank a Teacher Day.

Enjoy your half term.

Best wishes

Alison Hooper