

Mrs L Keogh
Headteacher
Ellingham Road
Chessington
Surrey
KT9 2JA
Telephone: 0208 397 3864
office@elp.rbksch.org
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Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for working so hard with your children to keep them engaged in learning. We really are thinking of you during this stressful time and hope you are all looking after yourself. This is an update of where we are with our planning for a safe return to school. There is nothing definitive at the moment, due to the changing nature of the guidance, but I will be back to you next week with something more concrete. There is also a note to highlight that there is an INSET day on Friday 22nd May.

Return to School Plans – Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6

We have been working hard this week to find a way of creating a safe return to school as soon as possible after half-term. It is a challenging task as we need to adjust our plans as we receive advice from the Department for Education and Local Authority. The newest change came last night so please bear with us.

Contrary to media reports, school staff can't wait to see the children again. Being with the children is joyful - they are the reason we get up in the morning. We miss seeing their faces, watching them giggling and playing, learning intently or seeking help, knowing that we're there for them. However, I have the difficult task of ensuring that, when the children return, it is safe to do so. While research does indicate that most children do not appear to get terribly sick with the virus, I feel a huge weight of responsibility to ensure that we reduce the risk of spreading the virus through children, staff, families and the wider community. I do not feel I can ask children and staff to return until I am sure that our planned return minimises that risk and we are doing everything we can to plan for that.

School will look different for our returning children and we need to be sensitive to prepare them for what that might look like so that any return is a positive return. We are reviewing how we can:

- accommodate children safely through social distancing in rooms that are designed for 30 children in close proximity
- allocate adults to lead split classes, across several rooms
- consider integration of key worker children to avoid cross-contamination if they require 5 days
- limit to the number of resources, pens, pencils, small world toys, to avoid spread of the virus

- adapt the curriculum to allow for split groups and a rota of attendance either across the week or alternate weeks
- manage break times and lunchtimes without groups overlapping
- ensure safe movement around the school
- install signage to support safe practices of handwashing and social distancing
- give teaching staff a lunchbreak without bringing more adults into the group
- clean thoroughly and regularly through the day and acquire cleaning products to do so
- safely drop off and pick up children at school
- maintain home learning for all other year groups.

For our very youngest children, Nursery, Reception and Year 1, the Government guidelines acknowledge that social distancing is hard to achieve. We would agree that trying to prevent children seeking physical comfort or enforcing boundaries from their friends would be detrimental to their experience of school. We are looking at how we can divide the children into small groups led by one consistent adult to minimise the level of mixing. This means if there is evidence of the virus, it is contained to one group of children and one adult so, whilst not ideal, it is at least managed.

Please note that we will not be able to run Explorers before and after school club as part of this return to school to avoid cross-contamination.

As I said earlier, this is an on-going process and as soon as I am clear on what we can offer in a safe way, I will notify you. Our risk assessment and plans will be discussed with the Local Authority next week and we should know more by the end of the week. A key part of whether schools return depends in whether the Government's five tests of safety are met and notification of this may come as late as 29th May, which is the Friday of the half-term break.

No Home Learning on Friday 22nd May

There is an INSET day planned for Friday 22nd May, the Friday before the half-term. As such, we will not be uploading learning for that day, or the half-term period, to allow staff to prepare for a possible return to classroom teaching and to plan for the next half-term based on your feedback to our recent survey on home learning. The senior leadership team and office staff will be available if you have any queries on that day through the office email address.

I am immensely proud of how our teaching staff have stepped up to create lessons through Google Classroom and adapted how they are teaching your children remotely, based on conversations with parents/carers and the children themselves. All school staff have willingly put themselves forward on the rota to look after the key worker and vulnerable children and we have lots of volunteers to do so even during the half-term break. We are committed to doing the best we can for your children during this time and are here to support you if you need any help.

Keep well and keep safe.

Yours sincerely,



Lisa Keogh
Headteacher