

Uplands Junior School

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Friday 12th June Uplands updates

I wish to give you an update following the Education Secretary/Government announcement on Tuesday that no further year groups are being invited back to school this side of Summer. He has accepted that most schools (particularly primaries) do not have the capacity, in terms of both physical space and teachers to welcome back more pupils.

Myself and my SLT have spent time going through reams of guidance, seeking advice from the LA and discussing if we have any further capacity as a school and unfortunately in order to comply with safety measures and legislation we are not able to welcome any other year groups into our building.

In the last few months we have been asked to respond, usually at very short notice, to circumstances we could scarcely have imagined as we entered 2020. Over the past few weeks we have been tasked with reorganisation of our classrooms and other spaces in school to ensure it is safe. Timetables have been drawn up to allocate staff to groups as well as plan Home Learning activities.

We currently have approximately 45 key worker children in school and this number is increasing each day-therefore 5 classroom bases are allocated for this purpose.

In addition we have approximately 30 Year 6 pupils at either end of the week with 4 classroom bases allocated.

Whilst we have 3 classroom bases empty, unfortunately, we do not have any further capacity to take more children in whilst current guidelines for social distancing are in place and bubble sizes are restricted to 10. We are unable to move staff from a group of children they are currently working with to a new group of pupils-this places both pupils and teachers at risk of cross contamination. Therefore between now and the end of term we can continue to provide for key workers and Year 6 children in school only as we are now. We understand that this is far from ideal and is frustrating both for yourselves and your children.

Other schools may make different decisions based upon the geography of their building, staff capacity etc and the LA have said not to compare school decisions. They have approved what Uplands is doing and feel it is correct and safe based on our setting.

On a more positive note, from June 15th we have slightly altered Home Learning to provide a clearer link to the Oak Academy/BBC Bitesize so that children can click on the link and receive some direct teaching (just not from Uplands staff). We are also investigating Google classrooms as a possible way of engaging and providing feedback to pupils and we are looking to get this set up within the next 2 weeks so that we can operate for the time remaining of this term.

We as yet have no idea of any plans for Summer holidays or September and like yourselves will await further direction from the Government and then the LA. We are planning for September and hoping this will be normal-we already have some ideas of how we are going to address gaps in learning and positive mental well-being.

For those of you with a Year 2 pupil due to transition to us, Mr Edmunds and I have been working closely together to formulate a plan. We will be inviting one parent to attend with their child on a day in July to collect a welcome pack and to briefly meet their new teacher. This visit will be following all safety guidance and social distancing -if the weather allows it we will be based outside. More information regarding this will follow. Mr Edmunds will communicate directly with Year 2 parents about his plans and Year 3 staff will be invited to Westacres to join in with these.

As always my very best wishes are sent to you and your children. Thank you for your unerring support over the last few months-we have been inundated with emails, Facebook posts, letters and telephone calls and to know our efforts have been appreciated means a lot to us so thank you for this. Please continue take good care of yourselves and your families and let's hope that life returns to some kind of normality soon.

