

Harting C. of E. Primary School



19th June 2020

Dear Parents

Over the last week, I have spent days on the feasibility of opening the school up to additional year groups. After much dialogue, mainly with key workers but also with other parents, it is apparent that this will not be possible due to space and staffing. This is with regret, as I hear how hard it has been for parents trying to juggle work with children at home.

I know that for many of you, this will come as a disappointment. Please be assured that I have explored every possibility to ensure that as many children as possible can be in school, whose parents wish them to attend. My priority, however, remains to keep children and staff as safe as possible and to comply with guidance.

After today, our register of year R, 1 and 6 year groups will be fixed, as parents have now indicated if/when they wish their child to return. This means that we will be splitting some of the current 'bubbles', as, with the additional children, they would have increased beyond the statutory 15. We have, however, tried to put children with their peers to make cohesive groups. Unless there is a **significant** mitigating circumstance, we are not able to respond to any parental requests about their preferences.

Should further key workers' children need to attend, there is no guarantee that they will join their own year group, at this stage. For now, however, most children will be with some of their contemporaries.

We will be having an additional 'bubble' for yR and a year 1/2 group. The latter will be known as Elsted group. Most of the year 1s, however, will now be in Hollist group.

Other 'bubbles' will expand to capacity. If your child is moving groups, you will be advised either by the class teacher or via the school office. Apologies if this is not done formally but we are working extremely hard to keep abreast of changes.

If your child is re-joining the school community next week, please check the arrangements for arrival times and the rules on the letter dated 20.5.20, although reception pupils' timings have been adjusted. This is housed on the home page of the school website.

Although we are asking children to wear school uniform, the rules on footwear are relaxed simply because many feet have grown! Trainers are acceptable until the end of term. Should you need extra supplies of school wear, you are welcome to call the office as we do have some good-as-new clothing here, which we are happy to provide.

Regarding health, we continue to try to keep our bubbles in their own spaces. It is difficult, however, for children to maintain social distancing (which is now acknowledged by the DfE) and keep the bubbles 'pure'. We are aware, however, that outside school children and families are already mixing more, as the lockdown relaxes.

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At lunchtimes, we are staggering entry into the hall; spacing the children so they are apart and facing one direction (apart from siblings); and children enjoy waiter/waitress service! Some children are eating lunches in different areas or outside, if possible. Clearly, there is plenty of handwashing and wiping of surfaces!

The additional hygiene applies to classroom activities throughout the day. We are somewhat awash with detergent, soap and disinfectant! Rest assured, we are trying our very best for everyone.

I am sorry if this letter represents bad news for you and makes the wait for your child to return seem to be unending. We do care and it is hard not having your children with us – something which none of us would have liked.

Please send our love to your children and let them know that it is the government, not I, that set the rules. I would hate for them to think that I have dictated the criteria or that they were rejected in any way.

Best wishes

Fiona