



MUGGINTON Cof E PRIMARY SCHOOL

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12th May 2020

Good morning parents,

I hope you are all well. Thank you for your emails, videos and photographs of the children's work. The blog has, today, had over 10,000 views. Thank you for your support.

You will be aware of the government announcement on the easing of lockdown and eventual reopening of schools. I will share with you the limited information I have regarding reopening and some very early thoughts I have about how we will make it work.

Firstly, and please rest assured there is no ideology/political affiliation here, the communication from the government and the DfE has been less than ideal. I think the majority of Heads expected Year 6 children's return to school to be on the agenda. Sunday's announcement threw us a curve ball with the inclusion of Reception and Year One children. We were told that more guidance would be published tomorrow (yesterday). The 50 page document discussed in parliament barely mentioned primary schools and was ambiguous at best.

At around 8pm last night the DfE published a hefty document for school leaders. I have looked at it in detail and it leaves a number of questions unanswered. For example:

- 1) It accepts that social distancing with little children is impossible. This is true and I am glad they have abandoned the pretence that it can be done. However, because the science demonstrates that children do not exhibit serious symptoms of Covid when infected, we can open. I accept this in principle. But, what about my staff? What about governors? And what about parents and Grandparents who collect?
- 2) Are we providing education or childcare? If it is education, I am concerned about Inclusion. My daughter, for example, is in Year 4 so cannot return to school. If Hal is being taught in school how will they meet Alice's needs? If it is for childcare, why specify these year groups?
- 3) What about families with 3 children, two of whom can be in school? Can we take the third child if we do not go over the 15 pupil class limit? It seems ridiculous not to because germs will be shared amongst all siblings.
- 4) No PPE for staff. Fine, to be honest, I would not wear PPE in front of children. It would unsettle them. However, staff are understandably nervous so what can we do to reassure them? Asking them to make their own face masks (which really has happened!) does not cut it. What about testing? What about the fabled antibody test?
- 5) Is the expectation that Reception, Year One and Year Six children are in everyday from June 1st? In addition, if the ambition is to have everybody in for one month before summer, that leaves little time for preparation on that scale. Why not wait until it is safe for everybody to return so we can project a sense of normality to children who have experienced an abrupt change larger than we ever did during our primary school careers.

- 6) 'The science' seems to be the new medieval religious fundamentalism. I have some experience of conducting scientific research. It needs to be published, peer reviewed and subject to rigorous scrutiny and replications. I find it frustrating in the extreme to hear 'we are driven by the science...' with no outline of what this actually refers to. I would like the DfE to publish all studies they have used to inform their decision that it is safe for 3 year groups to return to school and that it is safe for staff to be in school with limited social distancing measures and no PPE.

I have plenty more questions but will not bore you further! With this in mind, I am planning for a potential June 1st school reopening. Here are my thoughts. Large caveat, this is all subject to change!

For the first two weeks after half-term

- 1) Any return will be done in partnership with you. We are told to 'strongly encourage' you to bring your children to school. I am unwilling to do this. There will be no attempt to record non-attendance (as long as I know you and your children are safe, you decide whether or not to bring your child to school).
- 2) The school day will run from 9am - 3.15pm. There will be no before- or after- school clubs. We may need to stagger arrival times by ten minutes or so. This will be confirmed in a week.
- 3) Staff numbers will be kept to a minimum to limit childcare issues and the risk of spreading the virus. I will be in school with Mr Clarke, Ms Sutton to clean and Mrs Horobin in the office. Mrs Jones and Mrs Wallen will run the school blog for children who cannot come to school.
- 4) There will be no school lunches. All children will be asked to bring sandwiches to school. Children in Reception and Year One are entitled to free lunches so I would ask you to let me know what sandwiches etc your children like and I will buy sandwiches etc from a supermarket if you would rather not make a packed lunch for your child.
- 5) children can come to school in PE kit. The aim will be to spend as much time outside as possible - transmission rates appear to be much lower outside.
- 6) I would like to offer families with two eligible children the option of sending their third child as well. I will confirm whether or not I can offer this when I know!

Phew! The most important point is this: we cannot wait to see you and your children again. I hope you understand, though, that the safety of your children and my staff is paramount. I will not make a decision which exposes anybody to unnecessary risk.

The blog will be updated shortly. I did not think this was an email to write at gone midnight!!

Thanks and best wishes to you all

Joseph Green
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