



# Sleights Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Working together to be happy; to flourish; to succeed through our Christian Values of perseverance, respect and trust.

29<sup>th</sup> May 2020

## School reopening – May 2020

Dear families,

Last night, the government announced that they believed they were in a position to reopen schools. The Prime Minister stated that each of the five tests needed to make this decision have been met.

However, the Chief Scientific Advisor to the government made it clear that the R rate (rate of infection) remains close to one. We know from the many press conferences we have previously seen, an R rate of one or above is worrying to risk a second peak. The Chief Scientific Advisor continued to say that new infections are currently around 8,000 per day, or 54,000 each week. This was also acknowledged by the Chief Medical Officer. Both scientists in the press conference stated the country continues to have a "significant burden of infection".

The Independent Scientific Advisory Group (SAGE) have also released their final report, stating that they too do not think it is safe for schools to return at this stage.

After careful consideration of this announcement and all other information available to us, the school governors and I have made the decision that Sleights **will not** open to Nursery, Reception, Year 1 or Year 6 from Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June. Where requested, provision will only be made for families of key workers.

You will see from the volume of information I have sent out just this week about wider reopening, we have been working tirelessly to be as prepared as possible. Risk assessments are in place to tackle issues within school and many, many new procedures have been implemented to keep children, families and staff safe.

Underneath all of these procedures and risk assessments is 'the science'. This is something we have heard lots about in recent weeks, with a range of differing views on the transmission between children in schools. Along with the numbers shared in the press conference, these differing views have not provided us with the confidence we need to reopen on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

This decision has not been taken lightly. We have had many hours of reviewing information, discussing scenarios and considering the potential significant medical implications on children, families and staff.

It is very clear from the news, social media and discussions with others, a decision on whether or not a school reopens on June 1<sup>st</sup> is controversial and I am happy to speak with any family who has concerns or feedback about this. Please could I ask that concerns are shared with me directly to my email address.

Ultimately, my views as the Headteacher of Sleights is that it should be a place where children can work together, are happy, flourish and succeed. It goes without saying, they also need to be safe. With so much continued uncertainty around the impact of the virus on children, families and staff, even after the green light from the government, I need to feel confident that safety is something we can achieve.

We are not there, yet.

A range of scientific evidence indicates a safer reopening date of later in the month and, with governors, I will be carefully examining this too. The decision on when to reopen will be reviewed in the coming week and I will write again next Friday to update families.

The decision to not reopen is one agreed with the full governing body and Gemma Kellerman, our Chair, has released the following statement in relation to this:

“On behalf of the full Governing body of Sleights School, I would like to reassure you that we are doing all we can to make sure the school is as safe as possible for our children to return. We are working closely with Mr Grason to take into consideration the guidance available to us and to apply it to our individual school. We are assessing the risk and listening to advice available and we will endeavour to open the school when it is safe to do so for both children and staff.”

In the meantime, the new half term starts on Monday. This means we are looking forward to new tasks on Tapestry and the website and continuing home learning for a little while longer. School staff will also begin making contact with families again from Monday. If you need anything before then, please do get in touch with me directly.

Thank you for your continued support in this very strange time. Rest assured, the safety of our children, our families and our staff is *the* most important thing to us all.

With best wishes,

Scott Grason  
Headteacher

Gemma Kellerman  
Chair of Governors