



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.

23rd February 2021

Return to school for all children

Dear families,

As we know, yesterday, the Prime Minister announced that all children will return to school on Monday 8th March. We know that this announcement has, understandably, prompted mixed reactions, with families remaining worried about the Covid risk, but keen for the children to return to their friends and routine.

As always, the school has in place a robust risk assessment, which is regularly reviewed and amended to ensure children, their families and staff are kept as safe as possible. As we know, the very nature of Covid means that no school can offer a fully 'risk-free' environment, however, we will do our very best to minimise this. This will mean working in a way very much like the autumn term, with staggered pick up and drop off times, children working in bubbles and lots of handwashing!

Much of our arrangements for picking up and dropping off will remain unchanged from the autumn term and I will write to confirm these details in the coming days.

Some of our families are asking us about 'catch up' and sharing worries of their children falling behind. Again, this is perfectly understandable. I want to reassure everyone that we have a clear plan in place that will ensure all children, regardless of their individual starting point, is supported to cover work that they may have missed during lockdown, or need extra practise with.

As a school, we will continue to place emphasis on the two key areas of learning and wellbeing. We have organised a very clear plan that supports children's learning and wellbeing, as they return to school. You may have heard of additional funding being allocated to schools. At Sleights, this funding is being used to support learning and wellbeing in a range of ways. A full strategy of how we intend to spend this funding at Sleights can be found on the website.

Today, I wanted to reassure families of our plans and outline some key actions we will be taking in the coming weeks to support a smooth return for all children.

1. **Between now and the children returning on the 8th March 2021**

- Staff will contact all families to discuss individual needs or concerns. We will look at a range of ways to support children in returning. This may include a visit to school (after hours) to reassure the children, or ask questions of their own. Just let us know if this would be useful.
- Next week, teachers will also be posting videos to Tapestry of the classrooms and to say "Hello" before the return.
- Teachers have already identified particular areas of learning they will revise or recover with the children when they return. This will mean that the children will come back to school with no further disruption to learning.

2. From 8th March 2021 to the Easter break (three week period)

- The children will **not** return to days of assessments and tests. We will gather our information about children's understanding and assess in a different way.
- Children will enjoy lessons about the same topics planned for the home schooling period. Like all learning, we realise that all children will be in different places and levels of understanding, so these sessions will allow us to gain an understanding of children's next steps and strengths, without the need for formal tests. Then, using information from children's work and books in class, staff will then plan lessons to address gaps from the topics covered over the eight week lockdown period.
- We will continue to encourage key skill development, including lots of reading!
- Our daily circle questions will allow children an opportunity to talk about their feelings, worries or highlights if they wish.
- Classes will spend time reconnecting.
- Tapestry will be used to contact families to share updates about the children, including how they have settled back in. Families can continue to message teachers using Tapestry too!
- Where worries arise about a child's learning or wellbeing, plans will be put in place to ensure that these worries are being addressed. This will be done in collaboration with families.

3. Before the Easter holidays

- Once children have settled back into school and demonstrated their understanding of topics covered during lockdown, teachers will begin planning for the summer term, to ensure all gaps are addressed sufficiently.
- As we will be unable to hold parents evening face to face again, staff will telephone all families to have a discussion about how the children have settled back into school life and celebrate. Where there are worries or concerns, these will also be discussed and plans made accordingly.

I apologise for sharing lots of detail today, but hope the brief summary of our reopening strategy is helpful. Sitting behind this letter is a large body of work, including action plans and strategies that we will implement to support every child and family at Sleights.

I am confident that our plans will quickly demonstrate a positive impact on children's learning and wellbeing. In the coming days, we will be working tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that when our children do return on Monday 8th, they return happily, reunite with their friends and can begin learning in school again. Until then, please do get in touch if you have any questions or feedback.

Thank you for your continued support,

Scott Grason
Headteacher