



Le Cateau

Community Primary School

2nd November 2020

Dear parent/carers,

Update: Return to school and impact of a national lockdown

On our return to school following the half term break, I wanted to take the opportunity to provide some quick updates in relation to the latest directive from the Government regarding the 'national lockdown' that will be imposed later this week. Unfortunately, the full guidance and information around how this will impact schools is yet to be received however, as was the case earlier in the year, we will work through the detail and share this with you as soon as we possibly can. What we do know is that some small adjustments are needed at ground level and the intention of this letter is to bring you up to speed with these alterations at the earliest opportunity.

Before I share these elements, I hope you managed an enjoyable half term break and managed to spend some time with family and friends over the course of the week even under the strict ruling. I know, for some, it has been a challenge and not being able to carry out the things you would normally do has been frustrating. Sadly, the current crisis is making things rather difficult and staff members have also found this challenging!

Where do we currently sit?

As you are likely to have seen, a new national lockdown is to be imposed from Thursday 5th November meaning many of the measures imposed earlier in the year will now be implemented again. As it currently stands, the 'closing' of schools **will not** happen meaning it is '**business as usual**' for pupils at Le Cateau. I am aware that for many people this is a positive step however, I am also aware that some families will find this step difficult and have their own opinions regarding this measure. As it stands, there is still an expectation that **all children** attend school in the same manner that they have since September. I have had no other details so it is difficult to comment on individual circumstances at this moment in time and what measures may be imposed if families choose not to send their child/ren to school during the lockdown period.

Are there any changes in school?

In the main, the day to day running of the school will not change. We are still operating in Year group bubbles, we will still have staggered start and finish times and staggered lunches and the children will be taught in pretty much the same way as they have been since the start of the school year.

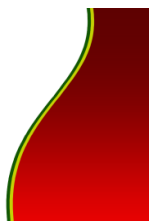
As per the guidance around the use of outdoors, this is something we will be continuing with. The advice clearly states that being outside in well ventilated spaces is safer than being inside a classroom for lengthy periods. With this in mind, it is vital that children are prepared to be outside at various points in the day. With the weather in Catterick being rather unpredictable to say the least, it is important that pupils have the right clothing with them. Coats are essential along with hats, gloves, scarves, etc and we are encouraging pupils to have extra clothing with them e.g. a spare fleece or top that can be worn. We will be continuing with outdoor PE sessions and children should come to school on PE days wearing outdoor PE kit (along with an extra top or two). Likewise, Forest School sessions will be continuing and the same applies for clothing.

For pupils in the Foundation Stage, Miss Bell shared some information before we finished for half term about wearing waterproof clothing and being ready to be outside throughout the day. I encourage you to look back at this information as we return to school and speak to the team if you need clarification.

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What is important is if children are prepared and kitted out correctly then the weather is not an issue. In fact, being outside when it is raining can add so many more dimensions to the learning opportunities!

What about staffing?

What we are expecting is some disruption to classes. We do have staff members likely to be told to start 'shielding' later in the week meaning some teaching and non-teaching staff will be required to stay away from the school setting. At present, I do not have the exact detail around this however, we are working behind the scenes to look at how classes will be covered if this happens and what this may mean for different year groups. As ever, once I know more I will share the detail with people.

We have also been impacted by the 'test and trace' system and currently have staff members self-isolating. Sadly, there is very little we can do about this other than follow the clear procedures that are in place. Unfortunately, I expect situations like this to continue to happen over the coming weeks and we will adjust accordingly. The impact of this does place significant strain on the capacity in school and ultimately, may result in the closure of particular areas. Obviously, this is something we hope to avoid but I cannot rule it out.

What about extra activities?

For some pupils, the weekly swimming sessions were due to commence next week however, with the closing of all leisure facilities, pupils in Year 3 and Year 6 **will not** be swimming this term. Arrangements for new sessions will be made once we know more about the national picture. If you have already paid for the swimming sessions then we will arrange for a refund to be issued in due course via Arbor. A refund will be made back to the payment card from which the payment was taken. If you have not yet paid, please ignore the previous letter and keep hold of your money.

We have also been in discussion with Marrick Priory regarding the activities for Year 6. Unfortunately, this will also be placed 'on hold' until we are able to access the facilities again.

What about wrap around care?

Under the guidance that we have received, it clearly states that any wrap around care linked to the education setting is **able to continue**. This means that Breakfast Club will operate as normal and PT After School will continue to provide their service from the school setting. Normal arrangements for bookings still apply.

What does 'Remote Learning' mean?

You may have heard this phrase used in a number of areas and is something compared to the national situation we are very much 'ahead of the game' with. Remote Learning is the term being used for 'education provision' implemented when a child, class, year group bubble, or ultimately, the whole school are required to stay at home. This may happen in two circumstances; when a child, class or year group are required to self-isolate due to a positive case/test and trace OR if schools are required to close due to COVID related matters/there is a full lockdown. Remote learning is implemented meaning a child can access learning alongside their peers even though they may not be in the building. It is matched to the curriculum content being delivered in school at that moment in time, is implemented, taught and shared by and with the class teacher and leads to more engagement than before. It **is not** Oak Academy!

During the recent Year 5 closure, we were able to implement many of the new strategies that we have developed and with a resounding success. 85% of those surveyed informed us that the provision was **'significantly better'** than previously so we know things are on the right lines.

Later in the week, we will be sharing our strategy for remote learning with you so you are fully aware as to what it looks like and what is expected. We will also conduct a short survey regarding access to IT equipment and the challenges that this may present for families as well as looking at how we can overcome any barriers that people may have to equipment should a full lockdown be implemented again. Following on from the last lockdown, we have undertaken a full review of the system we implemented and taken on board the many responses given by parents via various surveys so we hope things can be much better if we need to revert to this type of provision.

What about Parent Consultations?

All consultations with your child's class teacher will still take place. There are no plans to change these and the fact that they are conducted remotely via video conference makes it very secure and safe. If you have

not managed to book your consultation in then please do so by visiting this link;
<https://lecateau.schoolcloud.co.uk/>

What is happening with movement around the front of school?

One of the main concerns at the moment is the amount of contact people are having at drop off and collection times. With a national lockdown coming into force, there is now an even greater requirement for people to be vigilant about their actions and making sure we do everything possible to minimise contact and the spread of the virus.

With this in mind, we are looking at altering the drop off and collection system in various places and will communicate this later in the week as we implement the new measures. What we are considering is making a one-way system on the road in front of school meaning traffic will only move in a certain direction, making an alternative entry point to the school road and adding a clear exit so people are not crossing over and insisting on people leaving the area immediately and not waiting on the grass verge to drop off a child at a different time. We also need people to adhere to the start times and for pupils to arrive no earlier than they need to. This has been an issue over recent weeks especially with unsupervised children messing in the wooded area near school and running in between the cars in the school car park.

We are also considering a change to the drop off and collection area for the Foundation Stage 2 and Year 1 pupils. This is likely to move to the playground at the top end of school and means parents and pupils will access via the double gate on Teesdale Road. We would implement a clear entry and exit route meaning movement is easier and people are not stood around congregating in groups.

We are also highly recommending the use of face coverings for all adults as they move around the school site as well as asking that many of our older pupils make their way into and exit school without the need for parental supervision. In doing this, we significantly reduce the number of adults present around the school grounds.

I know that some of these measures can be frustrating and that 'the short route' that people like to take is not available, however, given what has happened over the last few days, we need to be more focussed on the safety element than ever before and ensure social distancing is our main priority.

When will we hear more?

As the guidance arrives, we are working through it immediately. This then allows us to look at what further measures are required and what we need to do in terms of actions. Once we have done this, we will communicate with the whole community. I am anticipating a further correspondence on Wednesday to provide people with an update however, this may change depending on circumstances.

All we can do is thank you once again for your support and patience and know that we are all playing our part in keeping everyone safe at these very challenging times.

Stay safe and take care!



Mr Ian Mottram
Headteacher