



Meltham CE Primary School

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Headteacher Phil Gibbins

Monday 12th July

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to update you on our arrangements for the remainder of the term.

As you will be aware, Step 4 of the road map is scheduled for Monday 19th July. As the end of our term is not until Friday 23rd July, I have taken the decision that school will continue its system of class bubbles and staggered starts until the end of the summer term. This includes the current systems in place in Meltham School's Out. This is consistent with DFE guidance which states:

"At Step 4 we will no longer recommend that it is necessary to keep children in consistent groups ('bubbles'). When we proceed to Step 4, this means that bubbles will not need to be used for any summer provision or in schools from the autumn term. If your school is still open at Step 4, you may wish to continue with these measures until the end of your summer term."

I believe that maintaining our bubbles until the end of term is in families' and children's best interests, given that the infection rate in Meltham and in Kirklees is still high, and that during the last week, we have been notified of several positive cases of coronavirus in children at our school and we have rising numbers of class bubbles closed and children isolating at home.

Please note that 10 day isolations for children under 18 will still be in place until Monday 16th August if families are contacted by school or by NHS Test and Trace as close contacts of a positive result. I know many of you will have holidays or trips to see families booked and I would not want to put any of these trips in jeopardy by allowing more children to mix in school during the last 5 days.

I have been informed by Kirklees Emergency Planning this weekend that I will continue to be responsible for identifying close contacts in school following 19th July and up until the end of term (*It will not be the responsibility of NHS Test and Trace as the guidelines suggest*). Should there be any positive cases reported to us in the last week of term, just as has been the case throughout the whole year, we will work with the Emergency Planning team to establish who needs to self-isolate. This may include identifying children and staff who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive. Close contact is defined as:

- face-to-face contact, including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within 1 metre;
- being within 1 metre for 1 minute or longer without face-to-face contact; and
- being within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact or added up together over 1 day)

In light of this, and considering that the vast majority of children in Key Stage 1 would need to be taught what we would ordinarily call our *regular* systems, I hope you will understand my decision to keep the school's COVID measures in place until the end of term.

What about next year?

In September we will return to our pre-Covid arrangements. This means no class bubbles and no staggered start times. We will open our doors at 8:45 for all children and everyone needs to be in by 8:55 as has always been the case. I hope we can all resume eating in the dining hall, taking assemblies together and children will be able to mix freely within their Key Stage playgrounds. I understand that there are large numbers of children who have not experienced *normal* at Meltham CE, and it will take some time to teach the children our systems. There are also large numbers of children who have forgotten how school *used* to be. It will take time.

I will write to you again soon to lay out exactly how school will work for your children: which gate children will enter by and the door through which they will come into class; what they will need to bring and I'll include reminders of what we usually do. Of course school is required to have a contingency to manage a potential local COVID outbreak from September. This will be in place in time for the autumn term and we will discover together whether *bubbles* have vanished from our lives, or whether they (and the other measures in place) will once again return in the autumn and winter.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to everyone involved in running the school: the governors, staff and support staff; the kitchen and the cleaning staff, all of whom have all worked incredibly hard this year, remaining positive, committed, calm and professional despite the challenges of Covid-19. Moreover, to all of the families, I would like to say a special thank you for your words of encouragement and your support in what has been an unprecedented year. We could not have managed without you and I feel proud to be part of such a supportive community.

Thank you, take care and stay safe

Phil Gibbins
Headteacher
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