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Headteacher: Mr A Wright

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope that this update finds you well and you are continuing to find ways to keep going during challenging times. As I write, I feel as though I have only recently updated you all but am aware that this week has brought two significant announcements both locally and nationally, that I am sure you will be aware of given the press coverage.

Delay in re-opening Lancashire Schools until at least 22nd June for Year 6, Year 1 and Reception

On Monday, Lancashire Council Council's review of the current local situation concluded that the Government's 'Five Tests' could not be met in our county. Therefore, they have asked schools to continue to pause their plans for re-introducing Year 6, Year 1 and Reception in a phased manner.

What does this mean for Moss Side?

As we have continued to communicate, all plans were always likely to be changed by local and national factors. The initial proposed start dates have therefore become invalid in most cases and we have discussed as a team the best way to modify our plans. It is really important that the shorter period of time that is now left in the term (potentially 4 1/2 weeks) is taken into consideration but that it also does not see a 'rush' to put in place procedures that are not safe.

The next step will be for Lancashire County Council to review their checks of the 'Five Tests' on Monday 15th June. The **earliest** that any further year groups may start back at that point is Monday 22nd June. We will continue to use a system of bubbles for 2 or 3 days a week initially (as has been outlined previously), in order to observe the impact of returning pupils on the safety of children, staff and parents. However, due to the reduced time between now and the end of the term, Year 6 will return during the first week whenever that is, as well as those Reception pupils whose parents indicated that they would like their children to return during the last survey. Should all go well, further Reception pupils (should they wish) and Year 1 pupils will hopefully be able to return in future weeks and parents will be re-surveyed at this point. I am sure you will all understand that, although the idea of priority year groups does not sit well with us as a school, ensuring that Year 6 have some form of closure and transition before moving to high school is very important. Every pupil has been disadvantaged in some way during this closure but, as a year group, they have missed many of the significant moments that they would normally enjoy in this final term and we hope to mitigate that loss in the best way that we can. As a school, we have the opportunity to rectify some of the consequences of this closure with all other pupils next year.

The school remains open for those pupils of key workers who require us to provide childcare. I appreciate all those families who have been considerate of the pressures that this provision has placed on the school and staff



by making alternative arrangements where available. As usual, if there are any issues please do not hesitate to contact school.

Government announcement to 'drop' plans for all year groups to return in July

On Tuesday, Gavin Williamson (Education Secretary) announced that the Government's initial plan to bring all pupils back in July has been reversed.

What does this mean for Moss Side?

Unfortunately, this means that all year groups will be unable to return before the summer. I feel at this point that it is fair that parents understand the position that we have been in as a school.

As I am sure you will be aware, head teachers nationally made it clear that it was impossible to bring back all pupils under the current guidelines (simple mathematics of staff and space). I have therefore been concerned that a national plan was given to parents that was impracticable or that would require a significant change of the guidelines in a very short period of time – most notably about bubble sizes. Equally though, I wish to reassure parents that the concept of 'picking and choosing' significant year groups does not sit well with us as a school. We remain hopeful that this decision will now give an opportunity for a national plan to be created that can bring all pupils back successfully in September.

Following this confirmation, we are discussing ways that we can increase support for all pupils and families. As such, you may notice some changes to home learning over the next few weeks in an attempt to keep it fresh and you should expect a phone call from your child's class teacher at some point in order to check in. We are also continuing to check any changes in guidance that may allow us to invite pupils back onto the field at some point before the holidays as a way to at least see their class again before the summer holidays.

I would stress that families should also continue to contact school should you have any concerns or (as many of you have done) just have a chat if you require reassurance or a sounding board. Ringing school, using Dojo messaging and contacting Karen remain options should you wish to do so. **Signing up to ParentPay and Class Dojo remain key resources in order for us to communicate successfully.**

Government plans for September re-opening

This week, both the Education Secretary and Prime Minister discussed their hope that all year groups will return in September.

What does this mean for Moss Side?

We have already begun to discuss the challenges that will be faced next year for pupils and the need to modify the curriculum that we teach. I know that many parents are concerned about the 'academic' loss of time and progress over this period but I wish to assure you that this will be dealt with. We share some of those concerns as a school but we will do everything in our power to rectify that over the coming months and years and we will work together - between home and school - to do so. It is also worth remembering that the entire nation is in this position (even though some areas of the country opened for 'priority' year groups last week, only 6.9% pupils are estimated to have been in school) and there will therefore need to be a national strategy. It is understandable to be concerned about your child's academic progress – I would always encourage such parental support – but it is worth remembering that the majority of pupils, no matter the position their family finds itself in at this point, may have made 'reduced' progress in reading, writing and maths. Equally, there will be some children who have benefitted from 1:1 time that would not be an option in school, even if it is just for short periods of the day. I say this, in the hope that it may give some families comfort who may feel that it is just their children who are affected by the closure. I am confident that, working together, this can be resolved next year.

As a school community, in collaboration with a national strategy, we will need to support these pupils to make up some of these gaps next year and, at the moment, I would repeat that anything that can be done at home will

help pupils. It is **still crucial that families do not apply unnecessary pressure to themselves** at present by setting unrealistic expectations for home learning.

More importantly, our curriculum will need to address the need to teach pupils how to socialise with each other again and to deal with some of the anxieties and worries felt by pupils during this period. Again, we will consider carefully how to manage this. There will also be a carefully planned approach to re-introducing pupils into school. I know that some parents may worry about the transition into new classes but I am confident that this will be easily overcome: we have a kind, caring and emotionally intelligent staff who will ensure that pupils return to a safe, warm, happy environment whenever that happens.

If there are to be ongoing 'social distancing' measures in September these will be communicated to all families. I am sure there remains a suspicion that schools receive prior warning about Government announcements but I assure you we do not; I was fortunate enough to get home for tea on Wednesday and attempted to analyse Boris Johnson's announcements whilst encouraging Will to eat his bangers and mash! At the moment, it is pointless to speculate further and I hope that September will be as 'normal' as possible.

This continues to be very challenging but we will carry on doing our best to support our pupils and families, in the same way that you have supported your own children, fellow parents and the staff team. The response of this community to this difficult time continues to astound me and I know that we will be able to carry on by supporting one another. Hopefully, it will become clearer how the remainder of this year and the next academic year may look for all our pupils soon.

We are desperate for all pupils to return but we know that we must follow the Government guidelines so that it is safe to do so. The most important thing remains the safety and wellbeing of all our community. Everyone has faced strains in relationships and challenges that we could not have anticipated over the past three months but we will get there if we continue to look after one another.

Stay safe and be kind,

Mr Wright