



Morton Primary School

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Headteacher: Kevin Flint

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Dear parents/carers,

You may have seen the broadcast by Boris Johnson last night. As I'm sure you are aware, school leaders have had no advanced warning of any of the information from government, and we have found out the same information as you have, from the briefings and televised addresses. I therefore found out the same time as you that we **may** be expected to try to 'reopen' school for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 as early as the 1st June.

I would urge you not to make any promises to your children about when school will return. Naturally, we all want to be back together. However, I insist safety must come first.

Again, as you will be aware, school has been open for keyworkers' children, and those with social workers since lockdown began. This has been staffed by those who are not shielding due to their own or family members' health conditions (which has reduced the number of staff available), and we have also been impacted by some staff having to self-isolate. We are therefore limited in the number of staff we have available in school. Those at home have continued to work very hard producing online learning, contacting families and safeguarding vulnerable pupils, as well as myriad other things.

Following the announcement from the government, I need to let you know some of the considerations and potentially difficult choices that I will need to take over the next few weeks, and my plan of action until the government has clarified what they are saying should happen.

My major priority is to ensure that the pupils, families (parents and grandparents), and all staff at school are exposed to as little risk as possible, and my one hope is that no one in our school family is bereaved as a result of this disease. As far as I know, we have been incredibly lucky that no one linked to school has died from COVID-19 yet; however there may be cases that we haven't been made aware of.

Any increase in the number of children in school (we currently have between 3 and 8 attending each day) will increase the risks to pupils, families and staff. "The science", unfortunately, is not clear about the additional risk that children pose; the National Education Union has set out various questions for government and the evidence which they see is relevant (<https://neu.org.uk/media/10436/view>) but have not had a response from government.

Whilst it seems to be true that children are not as seriously affected as older adults, there have been increasing numbers of children dying from COVID-19 related issues. There is also evidence that children have as high a viral load as adults, and therefore will spread it to the same extent even if not themselves showing symptoms (see link below).

https://virologie-ccm.charite.de/fileadmin/user_upload/microsites/m_cc05/virologie-ccm/dateien_upload/Weitere_Dateien/analysis-of-SARS-CoV-2-viral-load-by-patient-age-v2.pdf



I need to be very honest with you; even with those low numbers we have had in school we have found it impossible to properly socially distance, particularly for the younger children. Partly this is down to the logistics; our school corridors are less than 2m wide for example, and partly due to the fact that young children do not necessarily understand the implications of being close to each other.

You may also have seen in the press that all of the teaching unions have set out what they would like to see before a return to school. These include being able to make sure that there is appropriate PPE for schools, that there can be increased levels of cleaning, and that there is appropriate testing, tracking and isolating capacity when there are suspected cases in school. The announcement last night did not address any of these issues.

As a result, the unions may be strongly against any additional children being in school, particularly younger pupils.

However, I also recognise that for many families, their livelihoods may be dependent on their children getting back to school so that they can get back to work.

If we are to reopen for any year groups, I will assess the risks and plan for if and how these could be mitigated. **It may be that I feel that the risks are just too high to accept all those government are requesting.**

I will contact all parents again once it is made clearer what the expectations for school are from government with regards to accepting children back into school.

Thank you for your continued support, we are all trying our best in these uncertain times. As ever, the safety of the Morton Primary School family will remain my highest priority.

Keep well and stay safe.

Kind Regards



Kevin Flint
Headteacher

