



Newsletter 15th June 2020

Aycliffe Village Primary School



Dear Parents/Carers

It has been wonderful to have more children back in school today and to see their happy, smiling faces as they catch up with friends and staff! We have all been so proud of the way they have coped with their first day back and the new systems that are in place.

As this is my last week as Head Teacher, before I start my new job, I write my last message for the newsletter. I still feel very sad to be leaving but, as I said in my letter explaining my reasons for doing so, I leave with many happy memories of time spent with your wonderful children.

I was extremely grateful for all the lovely presents and cards received on what I thought would be my last day before the Easter holidays—thank you so much for these. The messages in the cards mean such a lot to me. I have had them up in my house since March, read them regularly and am not planning on taking them down anytime soon!

Thank you also to staff, governors and members of the community for your support during my time at our school—it has been much appreciated.

It doesn't feel right leaving at such an unusual time, however I have a commitment to my new post. My new employer has been very flexible and supportive in allowing me to start my new role at a later date, to help with consistency of leadership at school over the last couple of months. There is a message from our Chair of Governors below, with an update about leadership arrangements moving forward. To ensure this goes smoothly, I have been working closely with Mr Tait and Mrs Brown to pass on all relevant information and will continue to do so this week.

It has been a real privilege to be your children's Head Teacher, over the last couple of years. I wish you, your families and the whole school community all best wishes and every happiness in the future.

Mrs Helen Sutherland
Head Teacher

Update about future leadership arrangements from Mr James Walsh, Chair of Governors

Dear Parent / Carer

I promised that I would keep you updated on the process following Mrs Sutherland's resignation. Clearly the social distancing and lockdown measures have made progress slower than anticipated, despite our best efforts to move forward as quickly as possible with this. Governors will meet soon (virtually) to discuss processes for the appointment of a new head teacher and will keep you updated with developments for this. Due to timescales for appointment processes, we have been working with the Local Authority to arrange some interim leadership arrangements in the short term. Mr Tait, an experienced Head Teacher, from Shincliffe C of E Primary School, will provide leadership support to our school, initially working one day, and subsequently two days a week from September until the end of December 2020. We welcome Mr Tait to Aycliffe Village Primary School and thank him and his Governors for allowing this arrangement to take place. We would also like to thank Mrs Brown, who will be working closely with Mr Tait and providing cover in school when Mr Tait is at Shincliffe. We will confirm the working arrangements at a later date, once it is clearer how September looks.

In the meantime I would like to say thank you to Mrs Sutherland for all she has done for our school, she leaves an indelible mark that I know we will all reflect warmly on and I wish her all the best in her new role.

Kind regards
Mr James Walsh
Chair of Governors



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Reminders for parents/carers of children who are currently attending school

If your child is currently attending school, please remember the following.:

- All children need coats, as we will be spending as much time as possible outside, even if there is light rain!
- Children are asked to bring water bottles with their names on please (which they must bring and take home each day).
- Please stick to timings on the letter dated 8th June—some children arrived earlier than the given times today.
- Please make sure you don't drive into school grounds, at any time.
- Sun cream should be applied at home please and not brought into school. Please ensure children bring sun hats if the weather is warm as they may be outside for a lot of the day.
- Although it is non-uniform, clothing should be appropriate for school please, eg no crop tops.
- Children should only wear shoes with laces, if they can tie them themselves—staff can't practise distancing if they need to regularly tie laces.

Thank you for your support with the above and all other details shared with you on the letter dated 8th June.

Requests for future places for key worker children or children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6

Over the last week, we have had an increased number of requests for places for children to attend school. We have done all we can to accommodate these but, as some bubbles are now full, we have also started a reserve/waiting list. Our plan is to run as planned for the first two weeks, with a view to hopefully increasing the number of groups/bubbles from Monday 29th June. This of course depends on a number of factors but is something we are working towards.

If your child qualifies for a key worker place or is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 6 and you would like their name to be added to the reserve list, please email school with this request **by Friday 19th June**. Our email address is aycliffevillage@durhamlearning.net.

If we are unable to accommodate all requests, priority will be given to:

- Children of key workers and children who might be considered vulnerable (as per government directives)
- The order in which email requests are received from parents/carers

More details will be shared the week beginning 22nd June, when we have a clearer idea of numbers.

Update for parents of children in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 who are not key workers

As you will be aware from recent government updates, the initial commitment to ensuring all primary aged children come back to school before the end of term, has now been reversed. Due to the capacity of our school building with social distancing measures, numbers of children we already have in school and anticipated increases for key worker places, over the next few weeks, I can confirm that we do not have any plans to invite Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 back before the end of this term. We are very sorry this is the case, as we are well aware many children and families would now like their children to return to school. We hope the infection rate continues to fall so all year groups can return to school in September.