

Downham Preparatory School and Montessori Nursery

Newsletter

Dear Parents

We are writing to you all today to up-date you on the current situation.

When the government suddenly announced school closures on March 20th, we were advised to furlough our staff while we waited for further guidance and information. The school was closed over the Easter holiday. During this closure we contacted parents who were Keyworkers to ask if they needed childcare. As a result, we opened after Easter for Keyworkers' children.

Mrs Lillie and Miss Tighe were not furloughed and they worked with these children and sent homework for all the children who were at home. One of our cleaners also returned to work. Demand for Keyworker places grew and Miss Daultrey, Miss Simmons and Miss Lovick returned to work to ensure that all of our children could be looked after in small groups.

The government then announced that Nursery, Reception and Years 1 and 6 were to return to school on June 1st. Since the announcement, we have been working hard to prepare the school for these additional children. Three more staff and an additional cleaner will start work on June 1st. We are monitoring our numbers carefully and, if demand rises, particularly in the Nursery, we will bring more staff back to work. We still have 4 staff who are self-isolating, 2 more who are pregnant and one on maternity leave.

The government has also announced that they hope to bring the remaining Primary classes back before the end of term. We will inform you, as soon as we receive notification, if and when this will take place.

Some parents have enquired about Summer School. We are planning to run our Summer School as normal, depending on government guidelines. We believe that many of our children, especially those who have not been able to attend school, will benefit from coming in to Summer School to socialise with their friends and teachers, have outdoor fun and get back into a routine and a sense of normality before the start of term in September.

The stress caused to all by this pandemic, adults and children alike, is immeasurable. The wellbeing of our children, their families and our staff is paramount. We want to assure you that we are working very hard to provide help and support to those who need it; so that we can all survive this awful pandemic and return to school and normality as soon as possible. We have attached an updated list where you can find help and support if you need it.

The staff who are currently at work have asked me to thank you for the many messages of appreciation, thanks and support that you have sent in. They really have helped them to cope with what has been, and still is, a very challenging time.

Elizabeth Lafferty-Sharpe

Principal