



Reaching for the Stars !

Dear Parents and Carers ,

20th January 2021

I would like to address you all as a school community in this letter as I am anxious that we do not fragment into a variety of online sub-groups or factions of ' the haves and the ' have nots ' . across the school, our teachers are planning events and activities for our focus on 'Mental Health Week' - 1st -5th February on the theme of ' Express Yourself ' - more to come from Miss Brookes in the next few days.

School Places - Thank you all for your continuing support , patience and understanding since the start of January 2021 I know it is very hard especially for the vast majority of pupils and their families who have not secured places on site.

Capacity - Following discussions with Governors - SLT - Staff - Unions and Parents we are trying to function safely according to OUR (not the government , DFE or perfect school round the corner ') unique circumstances at Davyhulme Primary School.

Based on a roll of 520 pupils - **The Government Guidelines would grant places to anyone and everyone who claims Keyworker Status which would mean admitting between 50% -75% = 390 pupils across the site.**

Latest Joint Union Advice is asking for 15% = 78 pupils across the site.

We have arrived at a working figure of 25% = 130 pupils across the site.

Waiting List - As you can see from above it is inevitable that there will be many families who have not secured a place even though they believe that they have met the government criteria for Keyworker status . We sympathise with your plight and that of the many other families struggling with a whole variety of issues putting them under increased strain in the present circumstances.

Places have been awarded to pupils and their families for a whole variety of reasons which others may find difficult to understand. We are working hard to maintain Bubble Integrity across the school so that children don't mix and so we can reduce the chances of transmission. One cohort may have less critical workers than another so the places are filled by other pupils from that cohort - we cannot fill the places using critical workers (higher up the list) from another cohort because that would mean ' mixing bubbles ' . So one cannot claim " I should have a place because my work is more critical than Mr or Mrs ABC "

The only crumb of comfort School can offer you at present is to say that we are reviewing our capacity regularly and the families that have places . If we do not feel that cases are genuine then we reserve the right to revoke those places and offer them to someone on the list. This would also be the case with poor attendance , failure to engage or bad behaviour - these places really are like gold dust !

The other two options to consider are **a)** If you would consider a part time place IF someone with a fulltime place chooses to go part time so that the school place would be shared in effect ? **b)** If a pupil has to isolate for 10 days would you consider having the place on a temporary basis (for up to 10 days) on the understanding that when the original child returned to school your child would have to return to home schooling ? I know these options are not perfect but they might provide some respite for some families. If you are on the waiting list and would like to be considered for either options (or both) then please can you email keyworker@davyhulmeprimary.com explaining what options you would like to be considered for in future. In any case you will remain on the waiting list to be considered for a fulltime place should one become available regardless of whether you have chosen the above options or not. If places do become available you will be contacted by school directly by telephone so please do not keep ringing up, we have your details and will make offers when they become available NOT just on Mondays as things are changing from day to day .

Online Learning and 'Live Lessons' - A small number of parents have queried our reasons for not doing live lessons. We wanted to clarify our rationale:

- A live lesson, especially for Primary aged children, cannot replicate what happens in a face to face lesson.

In the classroom we can easily redirect a child's attention and judge how each child is getting on. This isn't possible in a live lesson with up to 30 children (35 in KS2), most of which the teacher can't see. In a classroom, a conversation between the teacher and an individual child who is struggling or needs to be re-focused is private, in a live lesson it is not.

- For similar reasons, the burden of supervision in a remote learning scenario rests as much with parents as with teachers. Where the material is part of the core curriculum, it is essential that all children hear and understand the content. We believe that lessons pre-recorded "as live" (such as lessons provided by the Oak National Academy <https://www.thenational.academy/>) give children the opportunity to pause, rewind and review and work at their own pace, and at times that suit the needs of parents who are juggling remote learning and working from home. Pre-recorded lessons allow parents to choose when their child completes the work. Live lessons would mandate when that supervision was required from parents.
- Pre-recorded lessons can be paused and re-watched. Some parents have suggested that we should deliver live lessons and record them to allow those families who can't engage with live lessons review the content again at their own pace. There are privacy issues related to the viewing of other children and families in their homes. We also don't feel it is appropriate to record live sessions because that would also record instances where children need extra support or need to be re-focused on the tasks at hand, and then widely viewed across the school community.
- We believe the quality of a pre-recorded lesson is better. Teachers can think carefully about their explanations and their concentration is on the delivery, rather than what everyone is doing in the session.
- We do recognise the value of live contact between the children and their teacher. The live feedback sessions are not delivering core curriculum material, so they can achieve the "keeping in touch" goal without compromising on the core curriculum delivery. If children are unable to attend the live feedback/ story session they aren't missing out on critical learning content.
- Some parents have cited other primary schools in the area as an example of a local school delivering live lessons. I have discussed this very issue with many colleagues across Trafford and beyond and I can report that regardless what we do there will always be small groups of parents who will never be happy with Schools no matter what they do and that is ok because that is a true reflection of life. One school is often played off against another school when individuals ' cherry-pick ' what is good about one over another. The truth of the matter is that teachers are human ...they make mistakes but they are working very hard and trying their best in difficult circumstances. We all know that the perfect ' school around the corner ' doesn't really exist either ...at least not in the real world.

We would like to point out that our teachers are working extremely hard teaching face-to-face for our Key Worker and vulnerable pupils, whilst also planning and preparing remote learning for those pupils at home and also giving quality, personal feedback to every pupil. It is also important to understand that pupils at home and pupils at school are doing exactly the same learning activities and following the same curriculum.

It is important to us that our offer is high quality, inclusive and accessible to all. We aim to improve and do better ...like our children we are always ' reaching for the stars '. For it is in the continual act of reaching that excellence is achieved ... we are not there yet but we are going to keep trying.

Thank you for all the positive feedback we've received so far.

PS - Those of you who are interested in Chess may want to (with your parents' permission) pursue the Delancey UK Schools Chess Challenge for 2021 by going to their website www.delanceyukschoolschesschallenge.com or lichess.org for a whole array of packages to practise your skills on.

