

Tuesday 7th September 2021

Dear Parents/Carers of Ecclesall Primary School children,

We hope your child/ren are feeling happy and settled back at school and excited for what the new academic year brings for them. We are very pleased to see everyone once again and as a staff team, have been very impressed with the fantastic attitudes of the children and to see such happy, smiling faces.

Whilst we are still waiting for the final version of the latest Sheffield City Council (SCC) Risk assessment, we thought it would be helpful to give you a little more information regarding our decision to continue to remain cautious for this autumn half term 2021.

Sheffield City Council send weekly guidance, advice and support to all Sheffield schools. Their advice is the following in bold:

“In all sectors and places of work I encourage you to remain vigilant and cautious. I know that control measures used throughout the last year do impact on your ability to operate fully and normally but being cautious for the time being will enable everyone to adjust safely”.

I also attended a Head teacher Public Health meeting yesterday afternoon and was given the same message. As Ecclesall Primary School staff and Governors, we believe this is the right thing to do for all our children, our staff and our community. We are hopeful that Covid-19 cases will not continue to rise and we will not have outbreaks in clusters across our school. However, it is important to tread carefully for the first half term to observe what happens now all 600 children and 65+ staff and Kids club staff are in school. We have been in close contact with our 10 local schools (SWIP South West Improving Partners group) discussing how we can relax a few measures such as the one way system and reducing our start and end times down by 10 minutes but remain cautious with other measures for a little longer whilst Covid-19 cases remain high in our area.

A few parents have requested that we explain our decision-making regarding not providing hot dinners from this September and using the dining room. As a large primary school with 600 children but with only 1 small dining room, providing hot meals presents particular risks and challenges. It is not possible for us to complete the recommended enhanced cleaning and ensure all the children have time to eat within the time available for lunch. Our lunchtime begins for some year groups from 11.45-12.45pm and for others it starts at 12.15-1.15pm; being 90 minutes in total with lunchtime supervisors shared across all years from Reception through to Y6.

Cleaning is still very high on the agenda for all work places including schools and so cleaning in between each year group sitting using the dining room would take a lot longer than 90 minutes. Lunchtime supervisors would not be able to work longer hours or Taylor Shaw cooks. It is just not possible to do it in this way at this present time.

Ideally, we may trial one year group using the dining room to start with and then rotate with other year groups taking it in turns to learn the new routines and how lunchtime works.

This half term the children will continue to have a choice of hot or cold grab bags or to bring their own packed lunch. (These grab bags comply with the school food standards set out by government). The children eat outside on the grass during dry weather or inside the classroom depending on the weather. The children continue to be praised for good manners too.

We appreciate your understanding with this. Please bear with us whilst we slowly but surely start to relax some measures but alongside this, continue to take a cautious approach so we do not risk the safety of our children and staff.

Thanks very much.

Kind Regards

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Ecclesall Primary School

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