



# CLERMISTON PRIMARY SCHOOL



Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

This is, I hope, my final communication of the school year (although I haven't checked if John Swinney has any announcements scheduled for today).

I'm writing to share with you the FAQs from our Parent Council meeting on Monday of this week. You will appreciate that events rather overtook them, but I hope they provide a lot of detail and clarity on what our blended approach would be if that is what needs to be implemented in August. Our presumption at this moment in time is that this is the contingency plan should 100% attendance not be possible.

You will find the FAQs at the end of this letter. You can also still complete the Parent/Carer/Pupil Feedback form here:

[Parent/Carer/Pupil Feedback form](#)

We have had over 200 responses so far which is phenomenal. Keep them coming!

I'm also writing to share with you the final edit of the Clermiston Primary School Show 2020.

You will understand that this is not the full and polished performance that you may have been treated to live, but I also think it has an added emotion and a sense of joy threaded through it to see children and staff collaborating on a shared project.

My thanks to Mr Lithgow for his cinematography and editing skills and to the staff team for putting all this together.

You can watch the full show here:

[Clermiston Primary School Show 2020](#)

But mainly I am writing to say, one more time, thank you. Thank you to all of you who have rolled up your sleeves, rolled out your creativity and got involved with your child's learning over the last few months. Thank you to all of you who puzzled through problems and solved them in the best way you knew how to.

And thank you to all of you who have supported the staff team here at Clermiston. It is very much appreciated. The staff have felt it, and I have felt it – we are very lucky to be working at this particular school and with all of you.

With my very best wishes to you all – stay safe and enjoy the summer.

Gordon McIntyre  
Head Teacher



## **HEAD TEACHER CORONAVIRUS QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION SUMMARY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2020**

**\*\*\* PLEASE BE AWARE THIS MEETING TOOK PLACE BEFORE THE LATEST UPDATE FROM THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT WHICH MOVED THE BLENDED LERNING MODEL TO THE CONTINGENCY PLAN. \*\*\***

**\*\*\* SHOULD WE NEED TO PUT THE CONTINGENCY PLAN INTO OPERATION, THE INFORMATION HERE SHOULD HOLD TRUE. \*\*\***

- What will the model be in August and when will we know what days our children will attend school?
  - If the blended learning model is put into operation, at 33% school capacity, it will be 1 set day per week plus an additional Thursday every 3 weeks. At 50% capacity, it will be 2 days per week (either Monday + Tuesday or Wednesday + Thursday).
  - You will be informed what days to attend as soon as possible.
- Going forward is Clermiston big enough to accommodate 50% of the children when that is allowed?
  - Yes. Luckily, we have a building with many door and entryways. Rough idea is 15 children would occupy a classroom and a half as not every classroom is singularly big enough.
  - This is without considering use of outdoor space which we have a lot of.
- As it looks like we will only be returning to school part time (or blended learning) in August is the school planning to ask parents for feedback about the home learning aspect as the situation evolves so that the home learning can be adapted as necessary? If not, why not?
  - Feedback survey has already been sent out to all parents.
  - A huge number of parents have been in touch during the lockdown period and the school has given out a wealth of technical, and learning & teaching, support.
- As far as I'm aware parents have not been asked to give any feedback about the home learning that has been happening since March.
  - Email has been constantly available as medium to give feedback.
  - Feedback has been encouraged and welcome.
  - All parents have received feedback questionnaire since question was submitted.
- How are the school going to split the days in the week to cover the percentage ratio of the kids?
  - If the blended learning model is put into operation, at 33% school capacity, it will be 1 set day per week plus an additional Thursday every 3 weeks. At 50% capacity, it will be 2 days per week (either Monday + Tuesday or Wednesday + Thursday).

- Learning at home will include the use of Microsoft Teams to upload work from the children.
- What are the arrangements for lunchtime?
  - Under the blended learning model, it will be packed lunches in the classrooms. This follows the principles of our 'Safety First' model.
  - Exceptions to this are possible where certain children may require/benefit from a hot meal.
- How do you envisage social distancing of the kids during break time?
  - Break times will be staggered to allow fewer children in a play area at any one time.
  - Hand sanitising will take place, as standard, before and after breaks (and on multiple other occasions throughout the day).
  - Nursery children will be in their "bubbles" for the duration of the day, including outdoor playtime.
- Do parents have the option to swap the allocated days?
  - No, that is impossible to facilitate.
- If the parents choose to not send their kids to school on the allocated days, will the school provide home learning materials? Will it be compulsory for the kids to attend on the allocated?
  - The normal course of action would take place – consultation with parents to investigate why this is being considered. There would be strong encouragement to attend school if we feel it is safe and in the best interests of the pupil.
- How will handwashing and toilet trips be monitored and managed?
  - Handwashing will take place before and after any trip to the toilet. It will be witnessed by a teacher and "I've already done it" will not be accepted as a response.
- Will outdoor learning be facilitated as part of daily school?
  - Yes, wherever possible and appropriate for high quality learning to take place.
- Do you intend to introduce online lessons with those not in school in addition to their one day a week in school? If not, why not?
  - The home element to the blended learning model will be similar to the home learning lesson plans facilitated by parents during lockdown. There will not be live lessons, as standard. Although there may be group activities, such as listening to a story, that may take place online.
  - Any work done at home will be uploaded onto Microsoft Teams for teachers to read, evaluate and on which to deliver feedback. The work done at home will form the basis for classroom feedback.
  - The importance of high-quality dialogue and interaction remains paramount.
- Will you require that work done at home is handed back in at school, marked and feedback given to each child?
  - Yes, but not in a "tick / cross" feedback style. That is not how high-quality feedback is delivered in schools.
  - Teaching and learning take place in the dialogue and interaction between student and teacher.
- This is an important year for P7s. I understand that there will only be 1/3 of the school in at a time. Will you prioritise the P7 learning against other primary classes in order to ensure they keep up with their peers in other schools and can confidently start high school next year?

- No, priority will not be given to any singular year group. All year groups have equal importance. There will be particular consideration given to P7 transition arrangements however.
- How will you determine who goes in on what days and will you take account of parents who have no choice but to go to work and can only accommodate certain days? Will there be consistency one week to the next to accommodate working parents who don't always have reasonable and understanding employers?
  - Priority will be given to siblings attending on the same days and then friendship groups.
  - There will be consistency in the weekly rotations.
- And this last one is just a request! Please can we use an online portal for work instead of Emailing via Parent Pay?
  - Yes, we will be using Microsoft Teams.
- When the schools do reopen, will the parents be able to select which days suit them best? I.e. for work commitments. Also, if one child is in High school will they have the same day as their sibling in primary school?
  - No, we cannot facilitate this.
- If the teachers are teaching face to face, will they also be expected to deliver home learning as well?
  - Yes, in the blended learning model previously described.
- I gather government guidelines are that children will be in school for 50% of the time but Edinburgh Council is only offering 33% of time in school. Do you know why this is?
  - To date this remains unconfirmed - we are waiting further information from both the Scottish Government and Edinburgh Council.
  - We cannot say exactly why this is the case for Edinburgh schools. There are some issues which probably contribute to this percentage and those include finite resources, staff availability, cleaning requirements, supplies (PPE etc), digital equality and budgetary limitations.
- Are supplementary teachers going to be recruited?
  - This is not currently necessary, but we would do this as and when it becomes so.
- Will they have the opportunity to do the home-learning work in the key worker provision? I know this isn't the case currently. If not, I would need to be doing schoolwork in evenings and over the weekends to catch up, which is not sustainable really for the children or the parents.
  - Where possible HUBs will take place within local schools. This will make it easier to support the children who attend the HUBs and the expectation is that the home learning will take place during the HUB school time.
  - We currently do not know how many children may require this facility. We do not know what the criteria will be for keyworkers, nor the length of a HUB school day.
  - We currently do not have information on our after-school club partnerships.
- A final one is, will keyworker provision be for the length of the school day only? I have not heard if before and after school clubs at Clermiston are able to open from August. Happy to pay but need some provision.
  - No information at this stage.
- Which staff will teach which class next year? Would it aid transitions if the kids stayed with the same teacher for the next academic year? Maybe it doesn't matter much if they are only in 1 day per week though.
  - The information was sent out to all parents/carers today.

- Children are all staying in the same class as last academic year (except the current three p1 classes who will form two new p2 classes).
  - Composite classes remain as they were.
  - Children in composite classes and/or job share classes (2 teachers in a week), may only see 1 of their 2 teachers in a blended model.
  - Blended model may simplify a job share class with all work online etc. Teachers in a job share class will work as closely as they have always done.
- If there will be blended learning (i.e. an online component, not just asking parents to do the teaching) then how will this be managed? For example, would there be an expectation that I give over my computer to my twins for certain times of day for online time with their teacher? If so, then I need to know so I can a) tell my employer because otherwise I'll be expected in meetings at that time and b) organise my diary for August onwards. I'd also probably need to buy two new devices as I don't think my employer wants sticky fingered kids pawing at my laptop. So would need to factor that in, alongside risk of redundancy from my work and lower income to cover it!
    - To date, no information for a digital offer from Edinburgh Council or the Scottish Government has been received.
    - Clermiston Primary has already given out iPads to families who had no access to an internet device.
    - We recognise the complexity of this issue and hope to receive more information from CEC or SG soon.
- What pushback has the school given to government regarding the documented lower risks of children as vectors of COVID (see letter in May by the RCPCH) but higher risk of emotional problems of sustained periods of no or minimal schooling. There has been no child with a COVID diagnosis in Lothian for 8 weeks (and no adult in an ICU bed currently - which is fantastic), and it would be good to know a) whether the school is aware of how low the rate is, and b) whether they are advocating to get the schools open with government and the GTCS.
    - This is not really in our jurisdiction so no pushback, thus far.
- To what extent is the guidance delivered to schools by Edinburgh Council open to interpretation by individual schools? Is it very specific guidance or more general? And if it is open to interpretation, where and how far is our school planning to implement any "tailoring" specific to our school?
    - Both. Large parts of the guidance have no freedom for school to make modifications.
    - However, there is leeway for use of staffing and outdoor space and the way in which transition from 33% to 50% capacity would take place is up to the individual school.
- I would like to ask more information about how the lessons will be split between home and school learning. Is there any plan to focus more on the core subjects whilst at school?
    - Yes, the core focus will be on literacy and mathematics, along with emotional health and wellbeing.
- I would also like to ask are there any plans to review where children are up to with their learning when they return as I imagine there will have been different levels of engagement with the home learning over the past months.
    - Yes, absolutely. Before lockdown, review and assessment were done daily and that will continue as the norm.
    - The "plan" in a very general sense, is to carry out assessment and to build up from there.
- Can I also ask how the composite classes will be split (working on the assumption there will still be such classes) - will they be split per class or children mixed back into the year they are in?

- The composite classes will be carrying on as they were.
- Will Clermiston be able to offer more than 1,1,2-day rota over three weeks currently suggested as this falls heavily below the government preferred 50%?
  - Please refer to earlier question.
- Will uniforms be preferred to be worn and with that in mind, will PE still be planned and therefore will gym kit be needed?
  - Same uniform guidelines as before – top half (polo shirt and jumpers) to be school uniform colours and smart.
- Will school lunches (hot meals) still be available or will it be a packed lunch format?
  - Please refer to earlier question.
- What are the plans for nursery? There has been limited detail on this so any information from the school would be useful.
  - The nursery provision has been extremely difficult to organise, particularly with the forest kindergarten element, but hopefully we will be able to share the model tomorrow.
- Assuming full day nursery has definitely been ruled out?
  - No, it has not been ruled out. It is more likely to be full day nursery, but not every day during the week.
  - In regards the new model, no-one who has requested a forest kindergarten place will miss out on one, but the model will be different from before. The forest kindergarten experience may be different to how it was before.
- Additional Support Needs – will the children get their additional learning support on the days they are in school?
  - Yes, there will be an increased role for support for learning. It will also operate under a new model with limited movement around school.
  - Support will remain tailored for individual children.
  - A toolkit is being produced and will be available soon.
  - Parents should fill in the feedback survey to keep the school informed with the most up-to-date information on their children's learning.
- Will there be adequate supplies of hand sanitiser in all the classrooms and public areas?
  - Yes hopefully. This is vital as it is the basis for the model which we plan to operate on at our school. A model which can allow the children to move around while limiting the spread of germs.
- Will children still have to swap indoor and outdoor shoes?
  - To be confirmed.
- Can you explain parents' responsibilities in relation to school should their child(ren) display Covid symptoms? And what should we expect the school to do should a child display symptoms whilst at school?
  - Information will come out in advance of school opening. We cannot comment further on this, at this time.
- Do you expect many changes to current plans over the summer period, if so, how will these changes be communicated to parents?
  - Any changes will be communicated to parents via email (plus text updates from Edinburgh Council). Email lines of communication will remain open throughout the summer. Parents should not avoid emailing the HT if they have a question or concern. Please stay in touch!

- How will the new model be communicated to the children? Will they be able to access something they can read for themselves on the blended learning model?
  - The blended learning model will be communicated to the children through their parents. Parents will receive all the relevant information and will be asked to deliver it to their children.
  
- What can the Parent Council at Clermiston do to support teachers and all the staff at the school right now?
  - The Parent Council can promote the completion of the feedback surveys emailed out to parents. The more information we have about a child's home learning experience, the easier it will be for the teacher and, even more importantly, for that child once they return to school.