



Discovery Drive Kings Hill West Malling Kent ME19 4GJ

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Headteacher - Miss Tina Gobell

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Monday 23rd November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing further to the Head Teacher's letter dated Friday 20th November and the difficult decision to close some year groups within the school. There have been a few questions in relation to this action, and I thought it would be useful to share further information which helped to inform the decisions taken.

The decision to close some year groups was not easy, and one that was supported by the Governing Body as being the only available option. The Governing Body was consulted throughout last week regarding the options available to manage the changing situation in school. I can also confirm that the decision to close some year groups was only taken following extensive liaison with the Local Authority and Public Health England regarding possible options.

Unfortunately, the School has been significantly impacted because of the number of staff currently self-isolating. As such, the School has no discretion over this and any individual directed to self-isolate by Public Health England is legally obliged to do so.

Currently, Public Health England has directed a large number of staff across the school to self-isolate. This is due to a variety of reasons, resulting in significant levels of staff absence due to:

- A large number of staff who have been instructed to self-isolate via the NHS Test and Trace App
- Staff who are self-isolating pending the outcome of a Coronavirus test
- Staff who are self-isolating because they were identified by Public Health England as being in contact with the confirmed cases in school
- Staff who are self-isolating due to a household member testing positive for COVID-19
- Staff who are currently unwell themselves with Covid-19, the origin of which has been outside of the school
- Staff who are currently self-isolating because a dependent is awaiting or has undergone urgent surgery

Additionally, some staff are unwell for other reasons.



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In total the School has over 50% of its staff unavailable to physically come into school and as such it cannot currently continue to operate safely with all year groups in attendance. A risk assessment was completed and shared with the Local Authority, so that all available options could be explored. This included considering alternating year group attendance or instigating part-time attendance, but operationally these options were not feasible. This position was agreed with the Local Authority.

Unfortunately, as is the case with many schools currently, rising cases of Coronavirus in the South-East is having a profound impact upon the running of schools. We have worked tirelessly to keep the school 'COVID safe' but unfortunately this is a complex matter with a number of issues that are beyond the school's control.

Any decision to close fully or partially is never taken lightly and will only be taken when no other options are available. We recognize the inconvenience and concern these decisions cause, however, the safety of our children, staff and wider school community must of course remain our main priority.

We thank you for your continued understanding and support during these challenging times and hope this letter has helped you to understand further the current situation.

Kind regards,

Mrs A Cornall
Chair of Governors



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