



# Ovingham Middle School

Ovingham, Prudhoe, Northumberland, NE42 6DE

Acting Headteacher: Mr I Lakey

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*Opportunity, Motivation & Success*



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23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I'd like to thank you all again for finding local solutions to keeping your children at home, so that we can have the smallest group as possible in school. From our survey on Sunday, we were due 19 pupils this morning- 15 turned up. Thank you!

It has been a very strange day today. We started with a brief assembly to explain how we thought the day might work. We talked about the virus and how it spreads, the importance of social distancing, trying not to share stationery, touching surfaces and touching our faces, etc. We talked about being positive, smiling and having a laugh. However, the day turned out to be rather sombre and not funny. It's amazing how it affects the human mood when you are trying to distance yourselves from each other. I think this must be particularly true when there are people right there that you can't interact with on a close, social level.

With the strong Government emphasis on social distancing, I took the decision to send many of the staff home today. I was very proud of how many turned up for duty. However, given the numbers of pupils we had, it seemed counterproductive to expose more people than necessary to then go off to their home areas, possibly transmitting the virus. As well as looking after our children, I was also following the Government message of **Staying at Home**.

As I drove home through Ovingham tonight, I was horrified to see groups of our children out playing together. I have heard people saying that children are immune, but this is not the case. Covid-19 can display a full spectrum of presentations across all ages, i.e. young people can be asymptomatic and elderly people can be asymptomatic. Young people can show full symptoms and old people too. It is true that on the whole, young people tend to recover better, whilst the elderly struggle more. The message from the Government is clear - STAY AT HOME. If you did not see this short film on the BBC news tonight I EMPLORE you to click on this link and take a few minutes to watch this film made by doctors, nurses and other medical staff. The reason why most children are not allowed at school, is so they can be kept apart! This is crucial in saving lives!

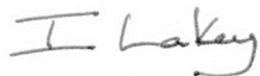
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-northern-ireland-51999437/stay-at-home-doctors-and-nurses-appeal-to-uk>

## For Parents/Carers of pupils coming to school

For our assembly this morning, we set out chairs in the gym on a 2m square grid. We were shocked how far 2m is when you actually measure it out. We didn't really have enough space to fit 20 chairs in our gym! Our corridors are not 2m wide, so we can't walk past each other and stick to the guidelines. Even with smaller numbers of pupils in the room, they have to get up and walk occasionally and they get closer together. With the best will in the world they forget and go to help each other. When children were doing maths today, it was very difficult to help them from a distance and you find yourself encroaching into their space. I'm telling you this because I want to be honest with you and not create false expectations of what we can achieve at school in terms of social distancing. I suppose it was new to us today and we should get better and more disciplined at it, but please don't think we will be able to adhere to perfect 2m social distancing, at all times. It quickly became obvious to us that it was going to be extremely difficult for us to maintain it.

I can assure you that we will continue to try our best.  
Finally, can I once again, appeal to everyone to stay at home and minimise their social contact.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "I Lakey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end of the name.

Mr I Lakey  
Acting Headteacher