



# Ovingham Middle School

Ovingham, Prudhoe, Northumberland, NE42 6DE

Acting Headteacher: Mr I Lakey

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22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thursday and Friday were very unusual days at OMS. We were already running with several staff down, due to illness and self-isolation. We were all covering other lessons in what we call our PPA time; it was all hands on deck really. After Wednesday's announcement, everything had to go in to overdrive on Thursday. While staff were keeping lessons going as normally as possible, they were also providing work to the office, who were frantically putting the work in to age-appropriate booklets and printing hundreds of them off. Both the staff and the photocopiers were overheating! I cannot thank the entire staff enough for how hard they have worked and how they have all pulled together over the last couple of weeks.

There was a sombre atmosphere throughout the school on Friday, I've never experienced or felt anything like it in my whole career. All of the pupils were brilliant! Very calm and supportive in lessons, which allowed us all to get as much done as possible before we ran out of time at the end of the day. It must have been a very upsetting and confusing time for all of them. For the Year 8's, it must have been very sad, as most of them may never be returning to the school and may have lost the chance to celebrate their time here and say goodbye. It's all happened so fast. However, our Y8's may have left the building, but you have not left our school community! We'll stick together via school 360 or some other means.

On behalf of the staff, I'd like to thank you for all of the messages of support we have received. We have had emails, posts on social media and even cards sent in to school, thanking us for the level of communication and telling us you are behind us. It has been very humbling and given a massive boost to our morale. Thank you.

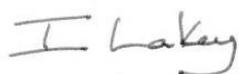
## Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March

Those of you who are key workers must be very concerned about your children having to come in to school. I want to assure you that we will do all we can to put in control measures to try and reduce the risk of transmission at school. As of Friday, we have 57 pupils due to come in to school. This is more than we had initially anticipated. However, we will be splitting them in to four groups of approximately 14 pupils each. This will allow a good level of 'social distancing' to take place. We'll spend a lot of time outside playing sports, tending to the school garden or our woodland area or just playing. We have used wedges to hold open all of the interior doors in school, so there is no need for us all to be touching the same door handles. We will carry out a regime of regular hand washing and we will have boxes of tissues available for sneezes and coughs. Half of the school will be shut down. We're planning on opening classrooms on the Eastern side of the school. Namely Miss Quinn's room, Mr Addyman/Wainwrights room, ICT room, Library, Mr Kane's room and Mrs Kemp's room. Plus the Technology and Art rooms, the Science lab, dining hall and gym. This will give us facilities to do a range of activities as well as space to spread out. Closing

half of the school will enable us to concentrate our cleaning and disinfecting routine and so increase the frequency of it. This will be helpful, as we will only have one third of our cleaning team from Monday.

In the meantime, please exercise great caution, be strict with your social distancing and stay safe.

Take care,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Lakey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "I" and a long, sweeping underline.

Ian Lakey

Acting Headteacher