



Ovingham Middle School

Ovingham, Prudhoe, Northumberland, NE42 6DE

Acting Headteacher: Mr I Lakey

Tel: 01661 833215 Email: admin@ovinghammiddle.co.uk

Website: www.ovinghammiddleschool.net

Opportunity, Motivation & Success

WE ARE A UNICEF GOLD
RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL



25th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carers,

I trust you are all keeping well and doing what you can to absolutely minimise your exposure to others, so that we are all doing our bit to reduce the spread of the virus. Please stay safe!

Home lock down and social isolation is going to be tough. Mrs Kemp, Mrs Hancock, myself and the pupils coming in to school, have certainly realised how strenuous social isolation is. An hour's lesson with 30+ pupils goes over quite quickly. Sitting in a room, cleared of all but six tables, with us all sat 2-3 metres apart and an hour seems to take three. The days are very long! We do talk to each other, but it's difficult to maintain over that distance. We already get a bit twitchy after about thirty minutes and have to change activity. We are having regular times outside, kicking a football back and forth (We can't play normal football as we can't get close to each other), trying to keep tennis rallies going, individually shooting hoops, sitting in the sun reading or walking circuits around the field (well-spaced out). As teachers we obviously value academic study, however, I am realising that everyone's mental wellbeing is going to become extremely important as time goes on. The staff at OMS are providing a lot of online work, but I'm worried that our initial plan of providing so much, may put the pupils under too much pressure. I'm not sure what the answer is just yet, but we need to be realistic. Time in the garden getting some sun, doing a jigsaw, family board games etc., are going to play an increasingly important part in our lives.

We were visited by the police today! I just happened to be at the computer in the office when a police car drove in to the staff car park. The policewoman driving spotted me and drove the front of the car as close to my window as possible. She held up her hand and raised a thumb. I nodded and returned the gesture, and off she drove. I can't explain the psychology behind it, but when I told the children and Mrs Kemp it was amazing how it raised everyone's spirits. If anyone works in the police force and can relay how much that visit was appreciated, I'd be extremely grateful.

Government guidelines for 'Social Distancing' in schools can be found [HERE](#) You may be most interested in the heading **How to implement social distancing**, which is a little over half way down the webpage. If your child is still having to come to school, you will know that we are already doing these things and more! If you have any concerns over our control measures, then please let us know via admin@ovinghammiddle.co.uk We will either be able to reassure you of our practice, or implement further controls, if they are within our ability. Please be assured we are extremely focused on keeping everyone in the building as safe as possible. We are obviously also continuing to keep to a strict cleaning routine at the end of each day and all areas and surfaces that have been used or touched are being cleaned thoroughly.

Staff rotation. I'm obviously no expert, but there is increasing information coming out about 'viral loading' and perhaps more importantly the 'infectious dose'. I have a duty of care to everyone in our school and so I will soon

be creating a rota system for staff caring for our pupils. The intent is that I reduce the risk of staff exposure to asymptomatic children and so reduce their potential infectious dose. I know this is a terrible thing to say, but it is important. Please remember that I'm very worried about your children too. Make no mistake, I am of the opinion that, if at all possible, our children should be at home or with friends who can be trusted to stay home and follow all guidelines very strictly. However, we will remain available for those of you who are finding this impossible to arrange. I know you will be using us as a last resort. I'm hoping to have a staff rota in place from Monday 30th March. Please be assured that there will be a handover period, so that everything we have learned and developed this week will be carried on by all staff in the rota.

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.

Mr I Lakey
Acting Headteacher