KING'S PARK PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

(EDUCATION AUTHORITY – SOUTHERN REGION)

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27 November 2020

RE: Length of the school day/opening and closing times

To all parent/carers,

At yesterday's Board of Governors meeting the Governors again considered very carefully the current length of the school day taking into account all of the factors that impact on this important matter.

Their three main priorities were firstly and most importantly, the health and safety of your child/ren and indeed your extended family, and the school staff. Secondly, given the above and restrictions placed on all schools by Covid-19 to maximise the length of the school day, and thirdly, to give everyone a consistent and a clear forward plan so that everyone can have stability to plan accordingly.

To this end maintaining class bubbles is critical in minimising the numbers of staff and children who will have to self-isolate for up to 14 days if and when we have positive Covid-19 tests reported in our very large school community.

Prior to covid-19 our teachers and children had a 15 minute break time each morning and a 40 minute lunch. In August our teachers agreed to remain with their class over break time and reduce their lunchtime to 30 minutes (a legal requirement) in order to maintain class bubbles. The Governors also employed an additional 12 supervisors over the new staggered lunchtime, again to maintain class bubbles. To date the arrangements put in place have we feel worked well in keeping positive Covid-19 tests to a minimum across the school.

Afternoon classes from 2.00 to 3.00pm have been particularly problematic in that if they were to function as previously then teachers would have had to cross into a number of other classrooms which could break the class bubbles and potentially expose 3 or 4 classes and families to 14 days of self-isolation if we had/have positive test results.

To try to avoid this Primary 5, 6 and 7 teachers agreed to continue with their class until 2.30pm on three days and until 2.00pm on two days. We are very appreciative of these teachers agreeing to remain with their class so as to minimise the effect of Covid on teaching times.

Having taken all the relevant factors and what appears to be a second wave of Covid-19 in the coming weeks into consideration, the Governors have concluded that the current staggered opening and closing times will continue until the end of January when they will again be reviewed.

We would thank everyone in our school community for your continued support during these extremely challenging times.

Yours sincerely and stay safe,

Mr W Jennett Chairman of the Board of Governors

Mr T Shields Secretary to the Board of Governors