



Dear Parents of Year 1 and 2,

I wanted to write personally to explain some of the decisions we have had to make with reference to the phasing of children into our Infant Schools. I have spoken to a number of parents and wanted to present this letter in the form of 'Frequently Asked Questions' so that you fully understand our actions.

I hope these answer your questions. If you do have any queries please do not hesitate to contact your school office and either your headteacher or I will respond.

**Q1. Boris Johnson announced that Nursery, Year R, Year 1 and Year 6 are returning so why are Meon Infant and Moorings Way only accepting Year R**

*As schools we began planning for the introduction of both Year R and Year 1. On Monday 11<sup>th</sup> (day after Boris's announcement) the DFE issued guidance telling us more information. This document told us we had to have groups of less than 15 children. The document also told us that **Infant schools had to prioritise Year R** if they could only take restricted numbers.*

*We originally looked at having part time access for both year R and Year 1 with adults working with Year R for allocated days then swapping to teach year 1. This was planned in some detail. That evening more guidance came out telling us that we **could not** use rotas and priority year groups could not be admitted on a 50% basis.*

*We have high numbers in reception, and groups of 15 or less means that at least 4 classrooms need to be used (that are equipped with sinks/drinking water etc). We still have to support our Keyworker children in schools and these have increased so they need to be in our remaining classrooms.*

*We have explored using staff and space across both Moorings Way and Meon Infant but with 12 classrooms altogether and 8 Year R groups as well as key children, we still have no space for Year 1.*

*We have limited adults in our schools. Some staff are needing to be shielded and are not allowed to attend school. Each group needs at least 2 adults as this is required to make sure if a child is unwell/upset/needs support the other children have adequate supervision. We have had to use all of our adults to house just the Year R children.*

**Q2. Why are some other Infant Schools able to take in Year 1 children from 1<sup>st</sup> June.**

*Each school has different circumstances, different spaces and differing amounts of adults that are available to work. Moorings Way is one of the smallest schools in Portsmouth. Between the two schools we have members of staff who have underlying conditions and will not put their safety at risk. We have looked at using staff from Meon Junior, but they too have staff that are shielding. When the staff are shielding they are still working from home to support the distance learning of other Year groups.*

**Q3. Will my Year 1 child miss out?**

*As you are aware all staff have been busy creating high quality activities for all year groups on the website for home learning. It has been a pleasure seeing the children's work and being able to share some of it with you on our Facebook page and this will continue as before.*

*When lessons continue as normal in the future we can work with all children on learning areas of the previous year that may have been missed. This is our specialism as educationalists and it is what we are trained to do.*

#### **Q4. Why can't we use staff from across our 3 schools**

*We are using every available adult to take small groups in Year R and Year 6. We are also ensuring that our other year groups are continuing to be supported with home learning.*

**None of our decisions have been taken lightly. We have modelled numerous ways to bring our children back. We want nothing more than to see our fantastic children and carry on as we were doing before the Covid19 Outbreak. No one option will please everyone but we have to take our Duty of Care to children and adults seriously. The plan we are rolling out is the only way we can welcome children back into our schools safely following guidelines.**

**If you would like some further reading on the guidance published then please cut and paste the following link into your web-browser.**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020> (the section on class size and availability sets out the Infant School priority range)

**If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the office on 023 9273 1082 or email our admin staff at [office@meoninfantschool.org.uk](mailto:office@meoninfantschool.org.uk) and we can get back to you.**

**As the Executive Headteacher responsible for Moorings Way, Meon Infant School and Meon Junior School I would like to just remind you again that all decisions made in our schools are done so with the safety of our children and adults at the forefront of our minds and on behalf of all our staff I would like to thank you for your continued support during this very unsettling time.**

Thank you,



**Sonia Nickerson**

**Executive Headteacher of Moorings Way, Meon Infant and Meon Junior School.**