



Orchard Primary and Nursery School

Head Teacher Mrs. Jane Chambers
Chapel Street Kirkby-in-Ashfield Nottingham NG17 8JY

Telephone (01623) 455939 Fax (01623) 459868
[Email office@orchard-pri.notts.sch.uk](mailto:Email.office@orchard-pri.notts.sch.uk)

Tuesday 2nd June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

It is with great sadness that we are writing to you to inform you of the fact that we are having **to postpone the partial re-opening of our school until further notice.**

This means our planned start date of;

- **Thursday 4th June for Reception**
- **Tuesday 9th June for Year 1**
- **Thursday 11th June for Year 6**

for the places we offered will now be delayed until a later date. You will be informed of the dates as soon as possible but we will not be reopening before the **week commencing 15th June at the earliest.**

The reason for this delay is because late on Friday and throughout the weekend we received correspondence from Nottinghamshire Local Authority which stated that Teaching and Support Staff Trade Unions '*remain seriously concerned about the readiness of all schools to open more widely this week*'. This is because '*they do not feel that there has been a reasonable amount of time for schools to prepare their plans with all staff in the short time since the risk assessment guidance was issued to schools on the 19th May*'. The correspondence also advised us that '*Trade Unions will communicate with each school opening this week with a view to escalating concerns to the Health and Safety Executive and to the press*'. We have also since received our own correspondence from some Trade Unions and their shared view is that the advice from the Interim Report of the Independent Sage Committee of scientists must be given serious consideration when the timing of school's re-opening is being determined. The report states clearly '*that decisions on school opening should be guided by evidence of low levels of COVID-19 infections in the community and the ability to rapidly respond to new infections through a local test, track and isolate strategy. There is no clear evidence that these conditions are met. Until they are it is not safe to open schools*'.

We feel confident that we have adhered to all Government Guidance to date and completed the recommended Risk Assessment procedures our Local Authority asked us to observe. However, we are currently in a consultation process with Trade Unions which our Local Authority have now requested us to complete, before opening our schools up wider. Sadly, the intervention of the Trade Unions has come very late and, unlike our neighbouring Local Authorities in Nottingham City and Derbyshire who have made the decision not to open any schools yet, unfortunately our own Local Authority have left the decision entirely in the hand of Headteachers. Due to this, our responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of all our pupils and all of our staff members needs to remain uppermost in our minds in our planning and as part of this we also need to support and respond to any well-evidenced local advice we receive.





Orchard Primary and Nursery School

Head Teacher Mrs. Jane Chambers
Chapel Street Kirkby-in-Ashfield Nottingham NG17 8JY

Telephone (01623) 455939 Fax (01623) 459868
[Email office@orchard-pri.notts.sch.uk](mailto:Email.office@orchard-pri.notts.sch.uk)

We will still continue to provide the places in school for children of Critical Key Workers and those children who are classed as vulnerable, which we have done for the past 10 weeks. Our Home-Learning will also continue for all pupils not in school.

We can only apologise for having to make this decision to delay our opening date and for any inconvenience this may cause some of you. Please know this has not been an easy one to make and the turmoil we feel personally is huge. We have families of our own and fully understand and sympathise with the negative impact schools being closed is causing. We are also acutely aware of the disappointment this set-back may cause to some of our pupils in Year 6 in particular. We are truly sorry, but we trust you will understand our reasons.

Thank you as ever for your continued and loyal support. You have been truly amazing as families since schools were closed and staff miss seeing you and your children immensely.

We will keep you informed of further developments and continue to do all we can further to ensure we can return to our planned partial re-opening as soon as possible.

In the meantime – please try to ensure you all stay safe and happy!

Mrs Jane Chambers
Headteacher

