



Rosendale Primary School and Children's Centre

Rosendale Road, West Dulwich, London SE21 8LR Tel 020 8670 4962 Fax 020 8761 9997

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Dear parent and carers,

Over the last few weeks we have been putting together plans about how we might all return to school safely in September. Having the children back in school has allowed us to see practically what we can and can't do. And last week government guidance was published outlining the health and safety requirements for a full return to school in September.

When we last met with the governors, the senior team put together a document which set out all of the challenges and opportunities we are currently facing. We then discussed strategies to meet those challenges whilst also using what we have learned through this extraordinary period of schooling. I thought it would be useful to share this context with you and talk through three proposals that we have put together to address our challenges. Once you have had a chance to read this letter, please complete [the survey](#) by 3pm Friday 10th July - we really want to hear your thoughts. We may not be able to change our plans but we might be able to adapt them to address your concerns and suggestions.

Challenges

The first challenge is financial. School funding nationally is at a crisis point after 10 years of austerity. For many schools, including Rosendale, the loss of income due to the Covid 19 school closures has had a significant negative impact on the budget. We are now in the situation where we are going to have to make significant savings and the only area left is staffing.

The government guidance on opening safely in September sets out that children should be in 'bubbles' of 30 and that adults should stay with one 'bubble' as much as possible, they may move to another 'bubble' within the same year group if necessary. These 'bubbles' should be kept apart, parents should not be allowed on site and children should not come together in large numbers.

The final challenge is one that is not new to us and that is to close the attainment gap between our children. We must make sure that all of our children regardless of their circumstances have equal access to education and the support that they need in order to be able to achieve. We know that homeschooling has caused a bigger increase in the attainment gap.

These are our challenges. Alongside these though we have opportunities which will help us to meet these challenges in the best possible way.

Opportunities

Being an academy, Rosendale has certain freedoms to be able to respond more flexibly to challenges. For example, we can select a curriculum that suits us, that reflects our diverse



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community and encourages debate and sharing of ideas.

Rosendale is an outstanding school and also a Research School. This means that our staff are highly trained, have an excellent understanding of what works in education and use technology in an innovative way. This knowledge meant that we were able to provide an interactive homeschool when many other schools were simply sending out photocopied sheets and workbooks. And as is always the case with Rosendale, we evaluated what we were doing, asked for your feedback and made changes to improve along the way.

One unexpected benefit of this crisis has been how it has brought our community closer together. You have been in our homes and we have been in your homes. Barriers have broken down and I feel that we all have a kinder, deeper understanding of each other's circumstances. And a commitment to do what is necessary to make sure that our children thrive.

And finally, we have been given an unparalleled opportunity to review how we work and to work in a different way. This period of schooling has been a gift to us and we have seen how well the children have responded. We have found that the children eat a lot more when they eat in their classrooms and that they can play actively and happily in a smaller area of the playground.

Plans for September

Having taken all these considerations into account, we have worked with our governors to put together some ambitious plans for September. We know that the start and end to the school day will look very similar to how it is now with staggered timings, and lining up outside.

Below are three proposals which we believe will help us to meet the challenges we have been set in the best possible way for our children. These are the solutions we propose and we want to know what it might mean for you and your family. We will also review these plans after one term.

1. Our first proposal is to shorten the lunch hour for children to half an hour. Lunch will be eaten in class and physical activity for the children will be built into the day in a more structured way as well as allowing time for imaginative play. We can see how much the children have enjoyed a different lunchtime experience and it also allows us to adhere to the health and safety guidance of keeping children in their 'bubbles' of 30 throughout the school day.

2. With a shorter lunch hour, children will be working an extra 30 minutes each day. Our second proposal is to use this extra time to enable us to close the school on Friday afternoon in order to give our teachers their Planning Preparation and Assessment time (PPA). PPA is a time which is set aside for teachers during a timetabled day to allow them to carry out planning. It's an allowance of time designed to remove the workload and pressures on teachers so they can carry out the administrative based tasks associated with



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the role. However, even with this time, teachers are still working more hours than they should. PPA is most effective when teachers from the same year group can plan together. In the past we have been able to use cover teachers to release teachers but as budgets have shrunk we have used Teaching Assistants. However due to financial pressures, we do not have a full time Teaching Assistant in each class and health and safety advice is that staff should avoid crossing year groups. That means the only way we can achieve teachers planning together is to close the school on Friday afternoon. We will be providing activities in our Art Studio, Laboratory and Gym blogs for children to complete at home. We know that this will be challenging for parents and we will be able to offer childcare for those who cannot home school that afternoon.

3. We would like to make sure that our teaching assistants are able to be in class as much as possible next year to support children and close the attainment gap through our 'catch up' programme. For this reason, we would like to close After School Club at 5pm. This means that our Teaching Assistants would be able to work from 9am to 5pm rather than 10am to 6pm and spend more time in classrooms to facilitate our 'catch up' programmes.

These are the three proposals that we are asking for your consideration. We know that many parents won't yet know what their working circumstances will be like in the future and so won't know what their requirements are for September. However, your views are really important to us, [please complete the survey](#) by 3pm Friday 10th July.

We will be back in touch on Wednesday 15th July to share the results of your feedback and to confirm how we will move forward. Thank you for your support.

Kate Atkins
Headteacher