Dear Parents and Carers,

As the school year comes to a close, I expected to be writing to you with a round-up of the year and to wish you all well over the summer break. Whilst I still wish you well, I write to you at a time that has seen extreme disruption to education, learning and social interaction for all our children. Families have faced stressful changes including juggling home life with home schooling, as well as the extra pressure of working from home. We appreciate that not having children in school every day provides further challenges and disruption. The past few months have been unprecedented and extremely challenging; I am immensely grateful to all parents and carers across Millbrook for your patience and understanding during this time. Although the future is still a little uncertain, and we still don’t know when life will truly get back to ‘normal’, we are looking forward to more familiar schooling and are excited at the prospect of seeing all our children back in school!

As you may be aware, the Government has now published a ‘road map’ towards re-opening schools for all children from September. This is very welcome news and to have all children back from week one is the principal plan we are working towards. However, should we experience a local or national ‘spike’ in infection rates, school could be guided to move towards a temporary lockdown (this could be the whole school or specific year groups) or a ‘split model’ on a temporary basis. A split model would mean having children in school on some days, and then learning at home on other days.

As we continue to plan for September, we have been reflecting on feedback (both good and bad) received from parents throughout this time. Should we be faced again with a period of extended lockdown, there are things we would wish to do more of, and actions we would establish between home and school more firmly and quickly. Examples of these being:

- More regular, personal contact from a member of staff (ideally the class teacher) which we accept at times (due to a variety of reasons) was varied across year groups.
- Our changes to home learning recently were well received, and our initial trial of ‘Millbrook TV’ has proved popular. As such, this would be restarted swiftly when needed.
- Maintain established year group e-mail contact addresses or provide an online platform that allows regular opportunity for feedback, teaching, learning and pastoral support.
- More equity between year groups with regard to time spent in school.
- A more bespoke offer and approach to the different phases of schooling (which for some year groups meaning increased learning tutorials and recorded on-line lessons as appropriate)
- Publishing Frequently Asked Questions (and Answers) to share explanations for the key decisions.

During this time however, there have been countless actions, often unseen by many, where Millbrook staff have gone ‘above and beyond’ which has made a significant difference to the lives of some families under our care. It is true that some families and children have received more of our support during this time than others. Although we recognise that this has not always been equitable, the decisions we made were through our best intentions.

From a personal perspective, I do have frustrations of my own with regard to the guidance and support that schools have received during this crisis from Government departments. At times, messages have been mixed and changeable; timelines short, and ‘headline announcements' lacking in any real detail. It is important to note that half of all primary schools stayed closed during the pandemic. Millbrook was one of the schools that remained open throughout this period, and during the Easter break, to serve a significantly higher than average number of key worker and priority group families, and we are rightly proud of that fact.

Although restrictions are easing, I do understand as we move to all children attending school, that many parents will have questions over safety. I can assure you that as we plan for September, the safety of our children and staff will continue to be our number one priority.

I hope that this correspondence offers you some reassurance and initial detail on the work that is taking place to welcome all our children and staff back into a safe environment.

A copy of the most recent Frequently asked Questions and Answers will accompany this letter.

This document will be regularly updated – and will be uploaded to our ‘Covid-19' tab on the school website:

https://www.millbrookschool.org.uk/topic/covid-19
Before the end of term, we will be sending home an ‘Opening Plans document. Please take the time to read this important guidance. Once again, my thanks go to you and your family for all your support in recent weeks. I hope that you are able to enjoy the summer and look forward to a new start or return to school in September. We very much look forward to welcoming our children back.

Yours sincerely

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Steven Rose
Executive Headteacher
Millbrook Primary School & Charlton Primary School

KEY POINT – Unless you hear directly from school please plan on the basis that we are operating within Plan A, meaning all children should return on Thursday 3rd September.

Information we will share with you before 3rd September

- Arrangements for lunch provision during Term 1 (including Universal school meals and free school meals)
- Operating guidance (year groups entrances, school timings, health and safety information)