



15th September 2023

Dear Family

Firstly, I would like to let you know how much I value the support you have provided the school. I am very proud to be a part of our community - the last week has been very inspiring.

The challenges have come thick and fast. I hope you will agree that it has been inspirational to watch staff, learners, parents/carers and the wider community all come together to demonstrate that with a collective sense of determination, anything is possible.

I started this year's staff training by playing them a short film about Moonshot Thinking and striving to achieve the impossible. It certainly was an apt metaphor for our current situation. The backdrop of travelling to the moon and facing the unknown seemed fitting, not only for our wider aspirations for our learners, but also for the immediate challenge we face - to do the unthinkable and make the impossible possible. In this case, replace half of our school.

You can watch the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEr4j8kgwOk>

Last week, I shared our three-tiered approach to tackling the situation in the form of short, medium- and long-term mitigations. In my previous letter, I focused more on the immediate challenges of our short-term mitigation in the form of remote learning. This update will focus more on the medium- and long-term mitigations so you have a more concrete (excuse the pun) idea of the timeline for the term and beyond

A reminder of our three-tiered mitigation approach:

- Short term mitigation will be a disruption arising from a partial closure supported by remote and blended learning
- Medium term mitigation will be to source additional teaching spaces on site
- Long term mitigation will be to complete a series of structural support works in the affected classrooms and phase their opening once each is complete.

Medium term mitigation

I am pleased to say that project 'Space Village' (our mini school) is taking shape and progressing well. I can confirm that all funding has been approved for our temporary school and we have had two organisations visit the school this week, survey the site and take measurements. They both met the tight deadline that we issued - to scope out the full project by the end of the day on Thursday. We are just in the process of ensuring that the designs and specifications will meet our full requirements and will provide a high-quality learning environment for our learners as well as meet all health and safety requirements - this should be complete over the weekend. We may begin the process of building a new temporary mini school on the field as quickly as next week - what I am calling 'Space Village', about Moonshot Thinking.

When I initially meet with the two organisations, I expressed my singularly focused aim - to open the school as quickly as possible. I set them the target to minimise the need for Cohort 7 to work remotely just before the end of this half term. Next week, I will be able to unpick the timeline and will provide a more detailed plan in my next update to you.

Space Village will be located on the school field behind our science building and alongside the bus turning circle fencing (see diagram below). This will involve separating part of the school field whilst the work is carried out. The project will be completed in two halves so that as soon as the first half is finished, we can open to another cohort. I would like to apologise in advance to our neighbours for any additional noise or disruption caused in the community as we receive deliveries. Hopefully this will be minimised as we plan to receive all deliveries and building materials through the bus turning circle when it is not in use by the school buses.

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Short term mitigation - Remote learning support

Unlike Covid-19 lockdowns, we are not able to take the approach of prioritising critical workers because we simply do not have the space. After looking more closely into the planning, staffing and resources to support using external venues we have concluded that this is not viable or practical as it conflicts with the effective delivery of the timetable. Therefore, we have secured a large marquee to be installed on the field to use as a remote learning centre so that we can begin to bring more learners back. The priority for this provision, in the first instance, will be to invite the rest of our SEND learners with EHCPs back into school. We should have this completed by next Friday and will be able open it for learners during week 4 - 25th September. The Remote Learning Centre will be located opposite the expressive arts block - see diagram below.

Parental support

Once the classrooms in Space Village are ready to use we will then need to prepare them for learners. This will involve moving a lot of furniture and resources from the main school to these classrooms. I would like to invite you and our community to help us with this task. We have been inundated with offers of help and support and I feel this would be a fitting way to bring us all together to get the project over the finish line. I am sure I can rustle up some refreshments and plenty of tea too!

Long term mitigation - Getting our school back

We have been making rapid progress with this aspect of the plan. However, it is the final part of the jigsaw and will take the longest time to implement. The solution is for some construction work to take place in each of our classrooms to install a new propping system within the roof. This is different to what has been implemented in hospitals and will not feature any poles extending down from the ceiling - in fact, it will not be visible as it will be placed above our ceiling tiles.

We have already had two surveys from structural engineers and have received approval from the DfE for our project - and more importantly, for them to cover the costs. We have now begun the design process for the propping system in each room. This should be finished within the next 1-2 weeks. Once the design process is complete, we will then be in a position for the construction to start. Conservative estimates for the whole project are 24-25 weeks. However, we will be approaching it in phases so further rooms can be opened as we go. Construction projects in schools can often come up against things that delay progress, however we should be able to open at least half of our closed classrooms by Christmas.

The whole project could be finished by Easter. At this stage, there are still many unknowns so please do not hold me to that just yet.

When the project is complete we would not have reached the end as these mitigations are to take us through the next 3-5 years. Beyond that, we will be looking at a potential new build for the school. For now, though, we are focusing on getting the most out of this year for our learners. New school conversations can take place when we are out of the crisis zone and school is operating normally.

Short term mitigation - Remote learning rota reminder

| Week A (Week 3) | Cohorts in School | Cohorts Remote Learning |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 18 th September | 7, 10, 11 | 8, 9 |
| 19 th September | 7, 10, 11 | 8, 9 |
| 20 th September | 7, 10, 11 | 8, 9 |
| 21 st September | 7, 10, 11 | 8, 9 |
| 22 nd September | 7, 10, 11 | 8, 9 |

| Week B (Week 4) | Cohorts in School | Cohorts Remote Learning |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 25 th September | 7, 8, 9 | 10, 11 |
| 26 th September | 7, 8, 9 | 10, 11 |
| 27 th September | 7, 8, 9 | 10, 11 |
| 28 th September | 7, 8, 9 | 10, 11 |
| 29 th September | 7, 8, 9 | 10, 11 |

| Week A (Week 5) | Cohorts in School | Cohorts Remote Learning |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2 nd October | 7,8,9 | 10, 11 |
| 3 rd October | 7,8,9 | 10, 11 |
| 4 th October | 7,8,9 | 10, 11 |
| 5 th October | 7,8,9 | 10, 11 |
| 6 th October | NPD | |

| Week B (Week 6) | Cohorts in School | Cohorts Remote Learning |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 9 th October | 9, 10, 11 | 7, 8 |
| 10 th October | 9, 10, 11 | 7, 8 |
| 11 th October | 9, 10, 11 | 7, 8 |
| 12 th October | 9, 10, 11 | 7, 8 |
| 13 th October | 9, 10, 11 | 7, 8 |

| Week A (Week 7) | Cohorts in School | Remote Learning |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 16 th October | 8, 10, 11 | 7, 9 |
| 17 th October | 8, 10, 11 | 7, 9 |
| 18 th October | 8, 10, 11 | 7, 9 |
| 19 th October | 8, 10, 11 | 7, 9 |
| 20 th October | 8, 10, 11 | 7, 9 |

I am going to leave you with the words of cultural anthropologist, Margaret Mead. They resonate nicely with our Moonshot project.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

Once again, a huge thank you for your understanding and patience. We will build half a school in less than 6 weeks so that all learners can get the great education they deserve. That has always been the mission - we are so close to mission accomplished. Next week we will have taken off!

Have a lovely weekend.

Yours sincerely



James Saunders
Headteacher