



3 December 2021

### YR Nativity – December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to let you know that we have taken the decision that the YR Nativity will be remote this year. This has not been a decision that has been taken easily and this letter sets out the grounds for our decision. Our original plan was to do a 'face to face' Nativity in school and, up until a short while ago, this remained a possibility. I realise that this will be as disappointing for you as it is for us - there is a magic around primary school Nativities which conjures deep emotions in us all. Recent rhetoric in the national press has fuelled this and has not been at all helpful.

Whilst the risk to public health has diminished significantly, the disruption to teaching and learning caused by isolation remains a key factor in our decision making. Aside from school disruption we are sure no one would thank us for having to spend 10 days in isolation in the run up to or over Christmas.

#### Who has responsibility for making the decision?

- The leadership team of senior staff and co-chairs of governors

#### How has the decision been reached?

- Discussions between senior staff and co-chairs of governors including consultation with EY staff
- Close monitoring of COVID transmission figures in our school
- Advice from Public Health England
- Advice from North Yorkshire County Council
- Consultation with Head Teachers from other local primary schools.
- Consideration of alternative venues.

#### What our decision is based on:

- **The recent outbreak** and continuing cases of COVID amongst our school community. This has necessitated a move to remote learning in two classes over the last two weeks in order to break the transmission chain in school. The proactive steps we have taken show some early signs of having an effect. We are committed to taking whatever steps we can to keep children in school safely.
- There is much speculation about the **new Omicron variant** of COVID and currently insufficient information about its possible effects on our community. The Government has already taken additional measures to stop the spread of this new variant and we are conscious of hosting an additional community event that may spread the virus further within our community.
- Our school **hall is small** - if we were to allow 1 parent of each child (to enable social distancing) to attend, we would have 30 children, 30 parents and 5-10 staff in our small hall. **Ventilation** in the Victorian part of the building is limited. We explored other venues but, following health and safety advice, ruled these out because of prohibitive factors such as the covid protective measure we would have had to comply with.



- Allowing only **one parent** would probably halve the joy for you and might make things especially difficult for 'split' families.
- Parents might feel under pressure to attend an event in a situation where they feel uncomfortable - we considered asking all adults to wear a face mask and have a negative lateral flow test before coming on to the school site but this is not without its challenges as a small minority of people do not want to do this.
- In our experience, four year old children can often be **intimidated by performing** for the first time on a stage. In a 'normal' year we can overcome this with a lot of encouragement from both home and school. However, expecting our littlest learners to face a sea of mask wearers, unable to read smiles and nods of encouragement would not be a positive experience.
- Other **local schools** have, like us, been making decisions in the best interests of their families. Each has its own story to consider; hall size, number of children on roll, current COVID transmissibility figures, geography of the building, size of venue, space and timing of the event. Most, like us, have chosen to move to a remote model, a few have chosen different venues or to use their much larger school halls.
- **Christmas is coming** - by gathering together we may unwittingly be jeopardizing the last week and a half of school and your family Christmas by having to isolate.

#### What we will do

- **The Nativity will go ahead and rehearsals are already underway.**
- We will **video the magic** as it happens and upload it to Tapestry. We will aim to do this before the end of term so that you can enjoy it with your family as many times as you like over the Christmas break. YR will also be able to watch themselves and the other classes will enjoy watching too.
- We considered live streaming but, to be honest, technology can be unpredictable and so can four year olds, however **we'll record those magic moments** as they happen.
- We will take some **photos of children** in their costumes and share them with you too as a keepsake.

I want to thank you in advance for your support - as a school we continue to act in what we consider to be the least disruptive way for our children and their families. During the pandemic we have been called to make some decisions that our hearts have found difficult but our heads tell us are the right thing to do. What is important is that here at Sutton CP, our traditional Nativity and celebration of Christmas will go ahead and that we are taking all steps to ensure that our school remains open.

Kindest regards

Fiona Beetles  
Headteacher