

7th May 2021

Dear parents and carers,

I wrote to you earlier in the week to let you know that our Headteacher, Mrs Todd, would be returning to school in the coming weeks. A number of you have been in touch since to share your concerns around this news and so I wanted to address these concerns openly, with our entire school community.

As you are aware, Mrs Todd has been absent from school since December 2020, following a letter that she issued to parents around the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. As you know, this letter specifically referenced the Bangladeshi community and for that, Mrs Todd is truly sorry. I, the other school governors, and Mrs Todd agree wholeheartedly that the letter sent to parents last year was hurtful and wrong, and we understand that it caused a great deal of upset and anger.

I want to assure you that we have taken the time to listen to and learn from those who expressed their concerns at the time. We have reflected on what happened and have been working hard to ensure that we can rectify the mistakes made and move forward.

Over the coming weeks and months, we will be meeting with members of our school community to listen to your continued concerns and most importantly, to put things right. We hope that together, we can move forward as a school and a community.

As a school, we pride ourselves on the diversity of our multicultural community and it is so important to us that we protect this. In the past, it is something we have been recognised and celebrated for and we don't want this to change.

Richard Avenue Primary School is an inclusive and safe space for our children and to ensure our continued commitment to this, we will be looking to improve on and strengthen our existing practices with equality and diversity training for our headteacher, governors and entire school staff.

We will also be reviewing our existing governance to ensure that our governing body – made up of our school governors – reflects our entire school community and the diversity that makes it great.

Mrs Todd is returning at a crucial time, to lead the school as our local community and the city of Sunderland continues to recover from covid-19. We all care deeply about providing the best education for our children, who have been significantly impacted by the pandemic over the last year, and we know that it is vital that we continue to help them navigate through it and support to thrive.

Please know that our door is always open and can you get in touch with us at any time. You can reach me at any time at hilton@richardavenue.co.uk.

Yours faithfully,

Craig Hilton
Chair of Governors