

Dear Parents,

I am writing to update you on the outcome of a review which we have undertaken following the road traffic accident that occurred on the Y3/Y4 school trip to Filey on 8th June. I realise that whilst this is an unprecedented incident, there are always lessons to be learnt.

Our priority throughout the day was to ensure that children and staff were secure and able to get back to school safely as soon as possible. Whilst this happened we realise that the collision provoked some concerns for parents. Health & Safety advisors from Sheffield City Council, senior staff and governors undertook a full review of the events that occurred and how they were handled. The review considered the following:

- Policy and procedures in place pre-visit and during the visit
- Roles and responsibilities of all involved
- Safety and well-being of all involved
- Communication, including the timescales
- Future events

Governor and local authority (LA) officers have scrutinised the paper work and preparation for the trip and the actions of staff during the trip. The review confirmed that the policy for the conduct of educational visits was followed, as were procedures regarding child safety at the scene.

As the senior member of staff on the trip, Sarah Drazek was been highly commended by the LA on her management of a difficult and hazardous situation and her liaison with the emergency services. All members of staff on the trip had received the appropriate first aid training as it is policy at Dore Primary School for all permanent members to be first aid trained. The LA commented that this is not the case in all schools and is good practice.

However, from the comments received from parents, the main concerns related to the content of the text message sent to inform them of the incident, as well as the timing of this message. To be absolutely clear about this, throughout the day the focus of school staff was to ensure that children and staff returned to school safely and that communication to parents and carers was managed in such a way as to not cause excess panic. However, the review has considered lessons that have been learnt in terms of how communication could be improved:

- The review concluded that the use of the word incident did not provide sufficient information for parents to be fully reassured. In future any emergency contact will come as a text, but will be followed by an email with more details as they are available. This email might also include a request that parents do not post on social media, but trust the information provided by the school. I would stress the importance of ensuring that contact information held by school is kept up to date as we did receive comments that parents did not receive the email sent.
- The review also recognised that it was extremely unfortunate that information on the collision was reported in the local news before parents had been informed by school. Whilst assurances were received that the school would not to be named in the local news before parents had been contacted and reassured, it is accepted that this was an unrealistic expectation. In any potentially critical incident it is vital that we provide information as

clearly as possible to avoid misinterpretation or distortion of the facts. Whilst we hope that something such as this never happens again, we have agreed to engage with the LA to support us with communication.

- The issue of the need for parents not to phone school has also been raised. We understand that it might be an automatic reaction for parents to contact school to find information but in cases where a great number of children are involved it is an impossibility for the school to field multiple calls. Because of this it is important that parents are contactable through text, email or looking at the school website and it is vital that the school uses these mediums to give accurate information.

Some parents are understandably anxious about future events where their children are out of school and the use of coaches. Dore Primary School carries out the necessary checks when booking any coach and will continue to do so. Staff are aware of the need for continual vigilance during visits, especially where the transport is concerned.

As the head teacher of the school I am immensely proud of the way that staff responded during challenging circumstances. We want to continue providing a rich curriculum, this includes offering educational visits to the children. I trust that this letter provides you with sufficient assurance about the policies and procedures in place in the management of these visits as well as the changes we have put in place to better manage communication in the future.

Best wishes

Mrs Lynnette Glossop

Head teacher

