



Dear Parents and Carers,

17th April 2020

I hope that you are all keeping well at this difficult time and managing to stay safe.

Thank you for the contribution you are making to the national effort by keeping your children in isolation at home. I know it is not easy while balancing working from home - members of the school staffing team are finding the same - especially if you are the sole parent in the home.

I want to talk to you about the next phase following the end of the Easter holidays. I realise that many of you would prefer your children to be in school at this time but I feel that there is a need to clarify school's position in the light of consistent guidance from the Government, Local Authority and the educational professional bodies.

School remains closed to all children unless they have a Social Worker, an Education Health Care Plan (Statement of Special Educational Needs) or have parents who are critical workers and who are not able to work from home (preferably both parents).

We have received a growing number of requests that children return to school or that we 'bend the rules' to accommodate families who are finding looking after their children while working from home really tricky. Schools are not permitted to do this: each day we send in a register of children's names to a DfE portal and have to tick which exemption category they fall under.

If at all possible keep your children off school to enable us to reduce the risk from the virus. There is much in the media about children not falling seriously ill from COVID-19. While this may be true, children will transmit the virus and pass it on to the adults and other children in school. One member of our staff team has lost a parent to the virus, staff have been ill with the virus and so have their children and grandchildren. Realistically, there is little social isolating within a school setting; the more children we have in school the less there will be. Each day we move to new classrooms after the room used the previous day has been deep cleaned and we cycle this way over three days to enable any bugs to be killed off. This would not be sustainable with more children in school.

Please help us to keep the school running for the children named in the categories above. With further reductions in our staff cohort we will not be able to safely run the school as we have many staff confined on 12 week isolations or ill with the virus. We have no PPE in school other than what we have been issued: one pair of gloves, one apron, one pair of goggles and one mask for the first aider dealing with the children or adults who show symptoms.

I am asking that even if you have a critical worker in the family but another parent who can work from home that you keep your children safe at home. I am also asking that if you are not on shift or recovering from a night shift that you keep your children at home if possible. I must emphasise the Government guidelines that say school should be seen as a last resort for childcare.

On another note, there has been a lot of loose talk in the media regarding schools reopening. I am in touch with the most up to date guidance about how this would work but I need to advise you that reopening

schools will depend on careful planning and national strategy, for example, vaccines, PPE, testing and full availability of the right staff.

Following on from this, schools must consider staffing and recruitment, transition arrangements, adjusting planning where children have missed teaching, passing on progress data and preparedness for the coming academic year.

It is an uncertain and anxious time for everyone. No one remains untouched by the virus or its impact at this time. There will be grieving for some.

What matters is that we work together as a school community to do what we can. I am very grateful to my staff team for working through their holidays with enthusiasm and willingness to step up in this crisis.

With kind regards and prayers that we all stay safe,



Mrs K Morris

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