



12th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

After the end of the first week of the national lockdown, I want take this opportunity to inform you on some recent developments and the rationale for some of our arrangements following updates from the DfE.

Critical Worker Parents

Thank you for completing the online forms to book your children into school. The information that you provide here really helps to plan the weekly provision. We are implementing a rota system for staff to try and reduce the amount of people in the building. This will ensure a lower risk of transmission and decrease the risk to staff, children and families; thus maximising safety for all. We will continue to use this weekly booking system and ask that forms are submitted by 10am on Thursday to allow time for rota's and timetables to be created please.

The Government announced new guidance last week that stipulates **'parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can.'** We really appreciate how hard this time must be for families: juggling work commitments, childcare, home learning and wider family anxieties, however, we kindly request that you are only using the critical worker childcare provision where **absolutely necessary and only for the days and times required.**

If you need the service then of course, we will be here for you. However, it would really support us to keep everyone safe if you could only use the service when you need it. **Onsite school provision should only be utilised when keeping your child at home is not an option.**

Remote Learning

Having two children myself, who have participated in home learning, I really do understand how challenging it can be to keep them on task and meet the logistical challenges of sharing equipment. We have been really impressed with the children's (and parents) levels of engagement and commitment to submitting assignments.

For those parents who have experienced a bubble closure, you will have noticed that we have moved away from live lessons to pre-recorded ones. This is to accommodate those of you with children in multiple year groups, to allow children to revisit modelled processes and fit in around your home schedule. We hope that this has supported flexibility and access to remote learning opportunities for you and your family. We will continue to review home learning provision and, in particular, feedback throughout the week and make improvements where necessary.

Whilst we appreciate that remote learning may not exactly substitute the learning experiences offered in school, the knowledge and skills covered weekly, mirror the curriculum coverage taught to critical worker children. **Children at home are receiving the same learning content as those in school.** Staff have



worked very hard to ensure they have been available to answer any queries and offer individual/small group support where necessary in order to improve understanding and therefore ensure all children make progress. Staff will continue to be there to support you with remote learning throughout this half term, please do not hesitate to get in touch if you are in need of additional support.

Local cases

Local cases have risen significantly in recent weeks and at time of writing, Wolverhampton has **987** cases per **one hundred thousand people** (in some areas doubling in the last week alone). This is a very high rate, compares with some boroughs of London and certainly puts us highest in the West Midlands (not somewhere we want to be). At the start of the first national lockdown we had no more than 11 children in across the whole school. At the start of this lockdown we have 150 – a significant increase, which is concerning with the transmission rates so high, particularly with the new variant of the virus reported as affecting people of all ages, including young people.

This presents huge challenges in keeping everyone safe and playing our part in bringing cases down. The government have declared that schools are safe for children but last week, the Prime Minister announced that schools *'act as vectors for transmission, causing the virus to spread between households'*. Furthermore, staff are often now having to double their workload, putting together pre-recorded or live lessons. **We are therefore urging all critical worker parents to follow government guidelines and keep your children at home if you can.**

Nursery Provision

The government announced at the end of last week that Nursery provision should remain open. This was guidance for schools and not statute. The government have also told schools that they must maintain a 2 metre distance (1 metre with a mask) from children where possible. Logistically, there are areas of our building, in particular those associated with intimate care, that do not allow us to safely distance from the children. I believe that I would be putting staff and children at considerable risk if we were to fully open Nursery. With the increasing transmission numbers in Wolverhampton, we have taken the decision to keep Nursery closed, only opening for children of critical workers and those that are vulnerable.

The speed of change and regularity of updates is challenging and something that we, as a school, are constantly adapting to. We are so grateful for the support, patience and understanding you have shown us during these unusual times and ask for your continued flexibility and support in minimising numbers of children in school as much as possible in order to keep everyone safe.

Yours faithfully,

T Hinkley
Headteacher