

Good morning all,

COVID update 04.01.20

I am sorry to do this folks, but further to yesterday's letter I write to update you on the developing situation regarding School opening following the Christmas holidays.

As you can imagine yesterday was a very busy day. Myself and every member of our teaching team was involved in meetings to try and reach a decision as to the safety of re-opening school after the holidays. I have also met our Chair of Governors, a panel of other Headteachers in Leeds and the lovely virologists at St James to try and best gather information for our school.

You will undoubtedly have seen on the news that the teaching unions have been active in trying to secure better information for schools to allow them to make judgements that protect their staff, families and children. This has been unforthcoming and has left each individual teacher with a difficult decision to make. I feel obliged to say that the advice from the unions is in the strongest terms I have ever seen in my career as a teacher and with little other information to go on I feel my teachers have been left with no other real choice but to follow the advice given to them by the body designed to protect their health and safety at work. Sadly this leaves teachers, once again open to public criticism in the press, despite the fact that they have been consistently providing an incredible service to children and families throughout this pandemic.

As I mentioned yesterday all but one of our teachers are members of the NEU union and **a decision has now been made unanimously that they will not return to face to face, whole class teaching until 18th January** (bringing us in line with secondary schools in the local area). This will allow local authority and DFE bodies to review the incoming data from Christmas and the data regarding the new COVID variant and determine the best way to protect our school community.

Our goal in approaching this pandemic has always been to get our school community through it whole and healthy. We have consistently made choices that have limited the risk to our families and as a result we have had few 'mini-closures', only 60 confirmed cases throughout the term and no cases which have led to serious complications or death. We have been very lucky, but it has been touch and go. In this instance I am asking you to keep faith in the decisions we are making as a school, as you have done all along, and know that we are doing our very best in difficult circumstances.

Online learning:

Online learning will begin tomorrow 05.01.20 for every year group from Nursery to year 6.

Nursery-Yr1 will be provided through Tapestry

Yr1-Yr6 will be provided through Seesaw

There will be 4 blocks of learning provided daily for children which will mirror the provision they would have received in the daily lessons. Teachers will be online throughout the day to respond to children submissions, mark work and give advice regarding misconceptions.

Keyworker provision: Opening hours for keyworker provision 8.45-3.15pm

Keyworker provision will begin on Wednesday 06.01.20

Please inform us if you will qualify for a keyworker place. These spaces can only be allocated for the days on which you will be working, so please specify the days and dates you need provision. This is,

as it was originally limited to ensure safe working numbers for the groups, in line with Union and PHE advice. So please only request this provision for sessions you cannot feasibly find an alternative childcare solution for eg: childcare bubble.

Should we have more applications for spaces than are available we will limit them to families with 2 keyworkers working on the same day.

Please send your requests through teachers2parents by 3pm today. Places will be confirmed tomorrow and provision will begin on Wednesday.

The learning undertaken during these 'Keyworker sessions' will use the content from the online learning provided by class teachers to ensure that all children at home and at school get parity of provision.

Vulnerable children keyworker provision:

Mrs Muphy will be in touch tomorrow with those families whose children are subject to an EHCP or are considered vulnerable to discuss take up of places. This is a family decision and we will support you choice relative you're your current personal circumstance.

LUNCH: we will continue to have to pay catering costs even though the school is 'closed' and so to ensure this food is not wasted, every child attending Keyworker provision will be provided with a free school meal as part of their session.

Free School Meal Provision:

A hamper will be provided to every child entitled FSM children who is not accessing Keyworker provision. These will be available for collection from the school office and the team will be in touch this week to give you a slot for collection.

Wellbeing calls and check-in's with children

These calls will begin on Tuesday in the same way as during the initial lockdown. We know they were incredibly useful in keeping both children and parents feeling connected to the school as a whole.

I am sorry for the upheaval we know this will cause to family life. It is not a decision that has been taken lightly but feel it has been made in the best interests of staff and children's wellbeing. Obviously we will keep the situation under review and will aim to return to normality as soon as possible.

All I can ask for at this time is for your continued support. This is not a situation of our making and we are doing what we can to responsibly navigate our way through challenging times. I will be in contact regularly over the coming days with updates as they arise.

With thanks

Mrs Wraighte (Headteacher) & Mrs Best (Chair of Governors)