



Monday 4 January 2021

New National Lockdown and School Closure

Dear Families,

Further to my letter sent out earlier today, I find myself in the unenviable position of having to communicate with you again following the announcement tonight, by the Prime Minister, of a new lockdown in England.

He has mandated that all schools now have to close with immediate effect despite only yesterday stating that schools should, and would, reopen as usual. The constant changes of direction and backtracking are putting an extraordinary amount of pressure on schools as we grapple with last-minute guidance and attempt to do our best for our school community.

Given the late announcement tonight, it is with huge regret that I have to inform you that, after consultation with the local authority and, in agreement with our Chair of Governors, we have decided that **school will be closed to all pupils tomorrow (Tuesday 5 January)**. Since March 2019, we have worked tirelessly, and throughout holidays, to ensure we maintain provision for vulnerable pupils and those whose parents are critical workers. **However, tonight's announcement has placed us in an impossible situation.** We desperately want to get this right for our pupils and families. The only way we can identify exact numbers of critical workers and ensure we have the staffing levels required to teach them is by closing school tomorrow. This will also give us the required time to put in robust plans for both in-school provision and remote learning. We understand that this is extremely late notice but hope that you will understand the situation we have been placed in.

Tomorrow morning, we will be sending out a one-day remote learning plan for all year groups to be used on Tuesday 5 January. The staff team will then work tomorrow to update our weekly remote learning plans and these will be ready to be used from Wednesday 6 January. Tomorrow, we will also be sending out further surveys to ascertain the number of families who do not have internet access or use of an electronic device so that we can ensure our pupils are supported to engage with learning away from school. We will also issue further details of our remote learning offer so that you are fully aware of the approach we will be taking for the first few weeks of lockdown.

We plan to open school for vulnerable pupils and those whose parents are critical key workers from Wednesday 6 January. Please now ensure that the survey sent out earlier tonight is completed by 9.00am tomorrow.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=JUsrfCLjsEqTVLApi5DMR36WDc848XhHhyvivYuPeCZUNEIDWINRMERIUTIxWTVUVkFPRIhRWEhWTy4u>

Without this information, we will be unable to plan for the organisation and necessary safety precautions needed for returning pupils. If we do not have a response from you by this time, we will be unable to offer your child a critical worker space.

The new list of critical workers can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision#critical-workers> Please note that even where a parent/ carer does fit the category of a critical worker, it may not be necessary to send your child to school. Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. **Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.**

Throughout this crisis, we have done all that we can to keep school open. Please know that we have not taken the decision to close tomorrow lightly. However, given the situation we now find ourselves in, we have been **left with little choice but to close tomorrow** in order to plan for the safe and effective roll out of vulnerable and critical worker provision in school and remote learning for all other pupils.

Please remember we continue to be here to support all of you.

Thank you for your understanding and support at this time.

Yours faithfully,



Neil McKellar-Turner
Headteacher