

8 January 2021



Dear Parent / Carer,

Once again we would like to thank you for your backing in what has been an extremely challenging beginning of term. Schools have rapidly moved from providing full onsite provision to providing limited provision for children of critical workers and vulnerable children and remote provision for all other pupils. Thank you for working with us to enable your children to continue learning wherever they may be and for your many messages of support.

On Monday 4 January, the Prime Minister announced a national lockdown in order to reduce the spread of COVID19, this has now come into effect. Full details of the lockdown restrictions including the duty to stay at home where possible can be found here:
www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home.

The current stage of the pandemic means that once again attendance at school is limited in order to support us to keep staff, families and communities as safe as possible by reducing the number of contacts we have with people in other households. **Limiting attendance at school is one of the main priorities.**

The new restrictions mean that schools can remain open only for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children to attend in person. All other pupils and students will receive remote education and must remain at home, in line with national guidance. Schools will be in contact with you at regular intervals to give you support to access remote learning if you are finding this tricky.

This is not welcome news for any of us – we all would want our schools to be the vibrant and inclusive places of learning they were until March 2020, but it is absolutely essential if we are to successfully protect the NHS and reduce the transmission of the virus.

Children of critical workers

Schools are remaining open to the children of workers who are critical to the COVID-19 response and EU transition response if they are unable to safely stay at home. **Please think carefully before sending your children back to school.**

It is vital that we ensure that the number of children and young people accessing the offer of provision in a school is kept to the lowest number possible, so that we can reduce household mixing and keep our staff, families and communities safe. **As a result, and in line with the school risk assessment, they may have to limit the number of children they can safely support in their bubble arrangements.** Therefore, even if you are a critical worker, if your child/ren can remain at home rather than attend school then they should. Please only use the offer of provision when it is crucial for you to undertake your critical role.

The list of critical workers can be found on the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Many of our schools have more applications than places so will have to ask you to verify this with a letter from your employer as to why you personally are critical to the COVID19 response or EU Transition and if not will ask you to access the offer for remote learning. Yesterday the government announced further changes to the critical worker criteria, it is important to stress that places are only available where the school's risk assessment indicates that they can be safely accommodated and will be different for different schools depending on risk assessments. Clearly, the more children and young people attending an education setting the wider the risk of spreading the virus grows.

Vulnerable children and young people – including those with education, health and care plans or a social worker

If your child has an education, health and care (EHC) plan and/or an allocated social worker they may attend their school or college. If you do decide to keep your child/ren at home and you need additional support, please contact your school and they will work with the local authority to support you.

The Department for Education (DfE) definition of vulnerable children and young people who can access their school or college can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Summer 2021 exams / Assessments

The Government has decided that, in the circumstances, it is not possible for GCSE and A Level exams to go ahead in the summer as planned. They will be working with Ofqual to consult rapidly and put in place alternative arrangements that will allow students to progress fairly. Please rest assured that all remote lessons will be continuing for all examination groups in order to enable our pupils to complete their full qualifications. We also understand that Primary schools SATs will not take place this year and your school will be providing more information shortly.

Childcare Bubbles

Parents can form a childcare bubble with one other consistent household for the purposes of informal childcare, where the children are under 14. This is mainly to enable parents to work and must not be used to enable social contact between adults. Some households will also be able to benefit from being in a support bubble.

Details of support and childcare bubbles can be found here:

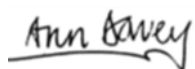
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-a-childcare-bubble-with-another-household#what-a-childcare-bubble-is>

When to Self Isolate

A reminder please to **isolate your whole family bubble immediately** if somebody in that bubble has symptoms and you are waiting for the results of their test. Please call your child's school and keep them updated.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/>

Once again thank you for your support in these challenging times.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann Davey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

Ann Davey
Chief Executive