

05.01.2021

Dear Parents / Carers

The Prime Minister last night announced that a [new national lockdown](#) will come into force at 00:01 on Wednesday 6 January.

During the period of national lockdown, schools, alternative provision, special schools, and colleges will remain open to vulnerable children and young people and the children of [critical workers](#) only. Children will learn remotely until February half term.

The government have reiterated the following:

'We know that receiving face-to-face education is best for children's mental health and for their educational achievement. We will be reviewing the restrictions on schools, colleges and universities and will ensure that children and young people return to face-to-face education as soon as the pressures are easing on the NHS.'

This decision does not suggest that schools and colleges are no longer safe places for young people. Instead, limiting attendance is about reducing the number of contacts that all of us have with people in other households.

We have resisted closing schools until now, but in the face of the rapidly rising numbers of cases across the country and intense pressure on the NHS, we now need to use every lever at our disposal to reduce all contacts outside households wherever possible.

For vulnerable children and the children of critical workers, who can still attend school or college, as they did in March to May, and their teachers, the system of protective measures means that any risks are well managed and controlled.

We are responding to the intense pressure on the NHS, but that pressure is not driven by children. We are not seeing significant pressure from coronavirus (COVID-19) in paediatrics across the UK. The new variant appears to affect all ages but we have not seen any changes in the severity among any age groups, including children and young people.

The overwhelming majority of children and young people have no symptoms or very mild illness only. As cases in the community rise there will be a small increase in the number of children we see with coronavirus (COVID-19) who only rarely require admission to hospital.

Vulnerable children and children of critical workers who can attend school and college

During the period of national lockdown, schools and colleges should only allow vulnerable children and the children of critical workers to attend. Please click on the following to see who is [listed as a critical worker](#) and are eligible for a school place. We are allowed to ask for evidence that the parent in question is a critical worker, such as their work ID badge or pay slip.

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We are currently awaiting information from central government but we will be providing the same online learning in school as we will be to those pupils at home. It is important that no group is treated any differently.

The number of pupils attending school needs to be as small as possible. As you have read above, limiting attendance is about reducing contacts which is particularly important in keeping staff, yourselves and family members safe. **Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.**

The announcement of the lockdown last night and the **clear message that if you can stay at home safely you should**, leads me to ask once again who needs to request a key worker place. Places may have to be limited.

Please click on the link below to request a place, even if requested previously. **Requests must be made by 1pm today so we can organise bubbles and staffing and inform parents.**

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdlysqziP2TNex2Ym3bB12kEmlFzHBa595UZHhBEKMvA-GzQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

If you need to request to loan a Chrome book to access home learning, please contact myself or the school office by 1pm today. Where possible, we will endeavour to meet all requests. Chrome books will be loaned for the duration of the lockdown and we will confirm whether we can meet the request this afternoon once we are aware of the demand.

We are allowed to open today for the distribution of remote education resources today and will be in contact after lunch on how you can collect these.

That just leads me to wish everyone good health over the coming weeks and thank you for all your support. It is with great sadness that we find ourselves in this position once again after a successful return to school in the autumn term however with the roll out of the vaccination programme and with everyone doing their part to minimise risk I hope we will be able to get back to face to face teaching after February half term.

Take care

Mrs A Brinton

On behalf of all staff and governors at Red Rose primary School.