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Dear Parent/ carer

The latest scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. **If children can stay safely at home, they should,** to limit the chance of the virus spreading.

Please, therefore, follow these key principles published by the DfE (Department for Education):

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.

2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then provision will be available for them.

3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.

4. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children/teenagers are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.

That is why the government has asked schools to remain open **only** for those children who **absolutely need to** attend. The fewer children and adults making the journey to school, and the fewer children in group settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect individuals in the wider society.

As a Local Authority we are asking schools, where possible, to continue to provide care for a limited number of children; children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

At the moment the vast majority of our schools are making provision for children that fall into the vulnerable categories and for parents identified as being key workers. However, just like everyone else, schools are also experiencing difficulties and need to keep adults and children as safe as possible.

Schools are following this clear guidance to help them make decisions about who they can and who they can't provide care for at this time. I would ask you to **listen to the school staff** and comply with their decision about whether they can admit a child or not.

Our number one priority is for the health and well being of all of all our residents and I would urge you as a parent to help by supporting your school to prioritise care only for those children and families who absolutely need it.

Further information can be found here.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers

I thankyou for your understanding and patience at this challenging time.

Kind Regards

Nina Dohel
Director of Education