

3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021

## **Temporary Closure of School**

Dear parents/ carers,

I am writing with a heavy heart to inform you that we are unable to open school tomorrow to any children other than Critical Worker/ Vulnerable children. A number of schools locally are having to make a similar decision, but each school's circumstance is different.

### **Accessing a Place in School**

To allow us to plan for the children who will be in school, please complete the survey by following this link if you think your child might fall into one of the categories:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MsideKWJan21>

Below is the link to the Government site defining key or critical workers.

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

If your child is attending tomorrow, they should arrive at the times already provided for their year group and should enter through their normal entrance.

The reason we are unable to open is that in line with union recommendations, a large number of school staff have notified me over the course of Sunday morning that they are exercising their right to refuse to work in what they consider to be an unsafe environment. Therefore, we have insufficient staff available to work in school and operate in the normal way for all pupils. Much of today has been spent looking at what is possible, hence the notification is later than I would have liked.

Staff are willing to support critical worker/ vulnerable child provision from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> onwards and to support home learning which will be in place from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> onwards. The staff are bitterly disappointed that the planning and preparation they had all made for the coming term has been disrupted in this manner.

I know that this will create many difficulties for you due to the timing of this letter and the practical complexity of home learning. I have tried to answer some of the questions you may have below.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. Why has this decision been so late?**

Unions have responded to the decision to close London Primary schools that was announced on Friday afternoon. They issued guidance to all members on Saturday afternoon and I asked staff to let me know their decisions in good time for me to notify governors and parents and the Local Authority.

### **2. Why do staff feel that school is more unsafe now?**

All of the staff members who have sent me their letters have made clear how difficult it has been to make this decision and that they wish it were not necessary to take this action. Staff have concerns following recommendations from SAGE, the speed of transmission of the new variant and its potential on the 'R' value. They appreciate that measures have been in place since September to allow the school to open but according to SAGE those measures "may no longer be sufficient."

### **3. How will my child access lessons from home?**

As before, your child will be able to access learning from home via Seesaw. The codes were provided earlier in the year.

### **4. When will school reopen fully?**

This is a difficult question to answer, but we are being led to believe that our move to on-line learning will last until at least the 18<sup>th</sup> January, matching what happens in secondary schools. We will reopen fully as soon as we are able to.

We do not want to take this action any longer than it is necessary to do so and please rest assured that we will be acting tirelessly to fully reopen school as soon as it is safe and possible to do so.

### **5. Is it safe for Critical Worker/ Vulnerable children to attend school?**

The fact that we can keep numbers low enough will mean that we can keep bubble sizes low in a classroom and considerably increase the expectations within our risk-assessment.

### **6. Why are different schools doing different things?**

Not all teachers and support staff are in the same unions and those who are in the unions concerned have all made decisions based upon individual

circumstances. This means that different schools will have different levels of staff participation in following this union action.

We understand that this is very difficult and frustrating, but hope to return to normal provision as soon as possible. More details about on-line learning will follow tomorrow.

Thank you for your support and help in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Roger Shone

Headteacher