

Executive Member for Learning and Skills
Director of Children and Families

11 January 2021

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s)

As you know, the country has entered a third lockdown and schools have closed for everyone except the children of critical workers and vulnerable children. The message from the government guidance is clear in advising people to stay at home if possible and restricting movement and engagement within the community. We must reduce contact and therefore reduce the infection rate of Covid-19.

We are at a critical situation in Leeds. The infection rate has increased again to 327 per 100,000, an increase of over 64% in the last week, and further increases are likely as the effect of the Christmas relaxations feeds through.

We understand that many of you may be anxious about the current situation. Whilst specialist provision will remain open we must emphasise that attendance at school for children and young people with special educational needs **is not** mandatory during this period. The health and safety of all of our children and young people is of paramount importance. We are therefore committed to working with you to co-produce your child or young person's individual offer of support during this time. We will focus on the welfare of your child or young person and ensure that they are able to access appropriate education and support even if they are at home.

Each school will have undertaken a health and safety risk assessment and will know the maximum number of pupils they are able to have safely on site at any one time, given the amount of staff they have available. In practice, the government recognises that our special schools may also encounter circumstances where they cannot provide their usual interventions and provision at adequate staffing ratios, or with staff with vital specialist training and that creative and flexible approaches will be needed, which may include a blend of home learning and face to face learning. However, we will work with you, to ensure there is good communication and plans are resumed as soon as possible.

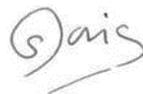
Thank you for your understanding in what we know is a very difficult situation for everyone. We recognise that this may cause considerable disruption to your personal and working lives. We really do appreciate the pressure this situation places on all of us but we are acting in the midst of a pandemic. We hope the progress with vaccinations means we can see a brighter future later in the year and so there is hopefully an end in sight.

Our best wishes to you all please stay safe.

Yours faithfully



Councillor Jonathan Pryor
Executive Member for Learning and Skills



Saleem Tariq, OBE
Director, Children and Families