



Dear parent carers

4<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## **RE: Return to school – Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

I hope that you are well and that your child/young person enjoyed the Christmas break and that they were not too disappointed in the slight delay to starting school. We recognise that many of our pupils will not understand the reasons for an emergency PD day and we apologise for any upset that this may have caused families.

As I explained in my letter yesterday, the teaching and support staff unions had sent communications out nationwide warning school staff of the perceived risks of Covid-19 in their working environments, stipulating that government guidance to schools is not robust enough, and therefore encouraging staff to invoke a legal reason for not attending work. It only became clear in the late afternoon of the potential negative impact that this would have on our classes at Severndale, as a number of staff confirmed their intention not to come into school. More specifically, this is the case for class groups who would not have any of their usual staff at work for an unknown length of time. A text was sent to all staff and parent carers, ahead of the details, to enable as much time to prepare as we could give. Apologies, if you did not receive this text. Please let us know and we will rectify this right away.

It would not have been right to close class groups affected in these circumstances, so we have evaluated the situation and reallocated staff to support the classes affected. Re-allocated staff will cover affected class groups for the duration of this unsettled period of time to ensure bubbles are maintained and continue to be Covid-secure. We thank staff for their cooperation and flexibility to this way of working as their commitment to keeping school fully open to all pupils is appreciated. We are now able to welcome all pupils back to school tomorrow (Tuesday 5/1/21) to begin the Spring Term.

You will be notified by the class teacher/ Department Lead if your child/ young person's class group has been affected by changes to staffing. This situation will be reviewed on a weekly basis, or sooner when the situation changes.

The beginning of term is far from what we would have wanted to provide to our children and young people, but I know that you will understand that the constantly shifting and uncertain landscape that we face, provides a real challenge for us all. I have received several messages from parent carers and thank you for your kind words of support, thoughts, and useful suggestions.

Our plans for tomorrow are now as secure and robust as we can make them using information that we currently have available and following the government directives that we must adhere to. However, we anticipate, along with the rest of the country, that there will be further updates/ announcements which we will then need to adapt to as we move forwards. You have my assurances that we will always do what we can to stay open to all our pupils, keeping everyone safe and secure, as we understand that our children and young people with SEND require their school and their routines, more than most.

We look forward to seeing your child/ young person tomorrow. Thanks again for your on-going support.

Kind regards,

**Sabrina Hobbs**  
**Principal**