

15th January 2021

(By email)

Dear Parents and Carers,

I wrote to you on Monday of this week to keep you up to date with the latest government guidance on access to school for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children. In that letter I informed you that the government guidance was amended to say:

‘Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school or college if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can’.

I indicated our concern that numbers in our primary schools continue to rise and that we have significantly more children attending school than at the time of the previous lockdown. Since that time, I can inform you that we now have over 1200 pupils attending our primary schools on a daily basis representing 30% of our total primary population. Some of our schools now have over 50% of their children attending.

Several schools have reported that the numbers of children receiving on-site education is now reaching maximum capacity. Schools are unable to maintain social distancing, safe practices and keep the size of their current bubbles low. I have therefore asked each school to review their current arrangements for on-site provision, one-way systems, numbers of children and adults in school, bubble numbers. Schools will then amend their risk assessments to ensure we remain safe, reduce the spread of infection and break the chain of transmission.

Headteachers will inform you of any changes in their individual school arrangements for on-site provision from Monday 18 January and may need to amend their on-site offer based on the priority listed below:

1. Vulnerable pupils and children where both parents are critical workers.
2. Pupils of staff vital to the provision of the on-site education offer.
3. Pupils where one parent is a critical worker and there is no alternative safe option.

I have also informed Headteachers that they should cap their on-site attendance to 50% of all children and an average of 15 children per classroom to maintain social distancing. From next week some schools are also introducing additional control measures. Some are starting to temperature check those pupils and staff arriving on site using a temperature gun. All primary staff will begin weekly Lateral Flow Testing which will allow us to avoid collapsing bubbles for those children who have to attend on site provision.

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Finally, a last reminder, please, if you are at home and NOT working (different if you are a critical worker and working from home or if your child is eligible to attend for other reasons) **keep your child at home to learn remotely.** The more bodies in school, the greater the risk for everyone.

Yours sincerely,



Rob Haring
CEO Westcountry Schools Trust