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Dear parent/carer,

In these difficult times that we find ourselves in, we hope you are well and are able to adhere to the Government directive of **stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives.**

This new lockdown comes with increased pressures for everyone, but schools are finding themselves in very challenging situations. We need to keep pupils and staff safe and successfully deliver remote learning for the vast majority of our children, while providing a place in school for those children who have no alternative provision.

We are asking all families to please carefully review their situation and re-evaluate the use of school places during this lockdown. The **sole purpose** of the current national lockdown is to stop the spread of a mutated virus that is many times more virulent in its ability to infect than the original COVID19 virus of last year. This can be seen in the high number of daily mortality figures. The principal tool that we have available to do this is by ensuring all contacts between people of all ages are kept to the absolute possible minimum, particularly as this strain of virus is known to be far more prevalent for transmission/illness in the youngest age groups.

We can confirm that the number of children presently in the school is **almost 500% higher** than those that were requested during the original lockdown in March 2020. This is only based on children who have both parents who are critical workers or a considered vulnerable. The number of requests takes this percentage even higher.

As a consequence, all members of staff are onsite in order to deal with the number of places taken up by families according to the Key Worker and Vulnerable children guidelines issued by the Government for this period of lockdown. Each request has been individually considered.

Infection rates are alarmingly high at present and we know that schools can be vectors for the infection to spread. The only way we can impact this is to drive down attendance at school wherever possible.



On behalf of the whole school community, and the wider community that we are all a part of, we are asking for your help.

- Please consider carefully whether your child needs a school place at the current time. Whilst there is Government criteria identified for key worker places, the fact that your child may 'qualify' for a place does not mean that it is the right thing for your child to attend school in person during this lockdown.
- Please, bear in mind that the more children that are in school, the harder it is for us to keep all of those staff and children safe. We are having to relocate one class in order to split them into two spaces as the numbers exceed 15 children. It also means that it is much harder to deliver a good remote learning experience for the children who are at home. The more children in a class, the more adults are needed and the challenge to maintain the support for remote learning becomes more challenging. If you can keep your child at home, please do so.
- If you meet government criteria but there is one parent/carer in your household working from home, we would encourage you not to send your child to school no matter how challenging this may be.
- We appreciate that home schooling can be incredibly difficult; however, we have worked with all parents and children over the past months and we know that our curriculum provision and technological support is strong. We are asking that you consider the greater good to protect the vulnerable.
- There are lots of opinions on the current situation and we ask that you disregard the actions of any other families or friends in the school or wider community and make an independent choice.

We are continuously looking at ways in which we can ease the burden of remote learning on parents so they are able to work from home themselves. Our plan is to ensure that we give children working in school or remotely equal teaching but this is not possible with such high numbers in school.

Our school ethos is built on trust and transparency which is why we have taken this step. Like you, we want to be able to provide the best education for your child but we also need to protect every group within our school community: children, parents, carers, extended families in bubbles, all staff including teachers, teaching assistants and support staff and all families and extended families.

We understand that this means making some very difficult decisions to ensure the safety of all, but we believe that by doing this we can help to drive down transmission of the virus together as a community effort. After reading this letter, if you feel that you are able to help us out, please email school: [newchurch\\_primary@warrington.gov.uk](mailto:newchurch_primary@warrington.gov.uk)

On behalf of all staff and governors, thank you for your continuing support and please stay safe.

Mrs Jayne Narraway

Mrs Rachel Burns



Head Teacher

Chair of Governors



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