

Tuesday 12th January 2021

RE: Critical Workers

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I am sure many of you will have seen in the news over the weekend that an update to the critical worker paragraph in the guidance arrived late on Friday evening. It now reads:

Critical workers

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections. 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.

We will always be here to support parents and that will not change. I am, however, very concerned about the rising numbers of cases, deaths and hospitalisations, many more than in original Lockdown in March.

However, the number of children in school is significantly higher than it was during the last lockdown. Last year, we averaged 14 across the two schools. This year, we have on average 27 at the infants and 49 at the junior school.

So, please, if you are a CRITICAL WORKER, can I request that you do not send in your child into school if:

1. Your partner / significant other is at home;
2. You are not going to work due to shift patterns;
3. You have a support bubble that your child could go to and home learn;
4. Your employer can enable you to work from home (please ask them).

The fewer children we have in school means fewer adults are required. If we can reduce children and adults in school then it becomes a safer environment for those who need the provision to provide the key services for our local area.

I have attached a letter from Sal Thirlway, Assistant Director of Children's Services for Wokingham, expressing the same opinion. Please read it all – here are the key points.

To help staff members, pupils and your families stay as safe as possible, please consider whether you are able to keep your child safely at home, instead of sending them to school, even if you are a key worker.

Remember, the new variant of the virus is highly transmissible, meaning it's easier to catch and easier to pass on. If more children can learn at home, where possible, it will help to bring down infection rates across the borough.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Best Wishes,

Miss Ball, Executive Headteacher