



Northfield Primary & Nursery School

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Sunday 3rd January 2021

Dear parents/ carers

Firstly, Happy new Year to you all and I hope that you are all keeping safe and well.

I am sure that you are all aware of the developments within the education sector over the last few days. The NAHT (Headteacher union) has initiated a legal challenge to the government's decision to fully re-open primary schools which are in tier 4 areas on Monday 4th January.

At the same time the NEU (England's largest teaching union) has advised it's members of their legal right not to return to teaching full classes of pupils amid serious health and safety fears.

Although the government are adamant that schools are safe places, following the release of the minutes from a meeting of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies - SAGE 74 (1) held on 22nd December, it is now clear that SAGE told ministers that they needed to close schools to contain coronavirus before Christmas. They are so concerned about the new variant that they cannot be sure that measures like the Spring lockdown will be enough to get the transmission rate (R) below the target figure of 1.

As a result of this, many staff who work closely with high numbers of children currently feel unsafe at school. As you know we have an extensive Risk Assessment in place, which is under regular review but the increasing rates of transmission alongside this 'new strain' of the virus is putting added pressure on to all staff.

In these circumstances, we feel that we cannot guarantee the safety of the staff, children and whole school community at this time and that everyone is being put at increased risk.

Therefore, we have taken the difficult decision to instigate an emergency inset day on Monday 4th January 2021. From Tuesday 5th January, we will only **partially re-open the school to key worker and vulnerable pupils, and possibly some classes at this time**. We will contact you tomorrow with more information regarding this. Whilst we believe that the best place for all children is in school, with their friends, learning, the unions feel that the risk is too high at the moment and we have a duty of care to everyone in our school community.

Can we request you to help us by monitoring emails and other communications regularly and sharing this information with other members of the school family?

The full list of Key Workers is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

If you believe you are a key worker, and require a childcare place, please complete the form attached and email to school at office@northfield.notts.sch.uk **ASAP and no later than 12.00 noon on Monday 4th January 2021.**

This guidance also includes information about vulnerable children. This is any child who currently has an Education Health Care Plan, any child who is currently receiving support from Social Care and any child who is currently classed as 'Looked After', so we would encourage these children to attend.

We would also ask that children of Key Workers only attend on the days when there is nobody to look after them at home. This way we can keep numbers low in school to minimise transmission.

It is important all children meeting the above detailed criteria, attending school, should continue to come to their designated drop and ensure they arrive at their designated drop off time.

Parents/carers of **free school meal** children can come and collect a free school meal from the office between **11.45am – 12.15pm tomorrow** if required.

Online learning will be available for all children as it has been previously. Please support your child's ongoing development by accessing this as much as possible during this time.

If your child is not attending school please expect to receive a welfare call from at least one member of staff during the week. This will be to check that everyone is ok and you are able to access the online learning. You will also be able to discuss anything else that you are concerned about during this time.

As I'm sure you can all understand, the current situation is changing by the hour; we will continue to monitor the situation as things progress and will keep you updated as much as we can.

This has been an extremely difficult decision for all those involved and not one which has been taken lightly; we do believe it to be the right one at this time.

Thank you in advance for your understanding and your ongoing support during these difficult times. Again, please accept my sincere apologies for this late notice.

Take care and stay safe.

J. Jenkins