



11<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and carers,

### National lockdown

Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer, is fronting the national campaign asking everyone to stay at home and protect the NHS. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-tv-advert-urges-public-to-stay-at-home-to-protect-the-nhs-and-save-lives> Please help everyone by following his advice.

### COVID-19

Please follow the national guidance of staying at home wherever possible, following the latest guidance. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home> The idea of the national lockdown is to minimize all of your social contacts, reducing the spread of the virus.

Can I also ask that if any of your household displays symptoms, that you **DO NOT** send your child into school? Please seek guidance from NHS 119 and where possible access a Covid-19 test. When a negative test is returned or the relevant period of isolation has been completed your child can return safely to school. This advice helps keep everyone in our school community as safe as possible.

### Hands, Face, Space and Ventilation

Pupils are washing hands and under supervision using antibacterial gel on a very regular basis and we ask that you reinforce this message at home as much as possible. Everyone in school, is maintaining their space from each other, wherever possible. National guidance states that rooms should be ventilated, as this time of year the air outside is cold and with all the windows open it can get chilly, pupils are encouraged to wear vests or t-shirts under their uniform.

### Pupils of Critical Workers or pupils classified as vulnerable currently attending school

On Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January, the government changed its guidance to say that pupils in Reception to Year 6 should ONLY attend school where essential eg. To facilitate the parent carrying out critical work therefore can I ask that wherever possible, please do not send your child into school if you are able to work from home. So for example, if you work on a Mon, Tue and Wed in a hospital, please only send your child into school on those days and keep them at home on Thurs and Fri. I appreciate that this is hard, but the more we can do to minimize the spread the quicker we will get back to normal and have every child back in school.

### Nursery pupils

To all parents of pupils in Nursery ONLY, the government changed their guidance on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January to say that if you want your child to attend nursery, they can. Please also keep in

mind the updated national government campaign to stay at home. If you now need a place for your nursery child, please contact school 0191 2672233 to book a place.

### **Computers**

We have still not received our government allocation of any laptops yet. We have several older laptops which could be loaned out to families – please ring school if you have no access to any electronic devices at home and need help.

### **Online Learning**

Following government guidance, last week, all the weekly teaching and learning is now being uploaded to the school website.

As you can imagine, this is a bit like Goldilocks and the three bears, some parents want more work, some want less and some think we are hitting it about right. Some parents want all work sent home in the form of worksheets whilst others want projects and activities, whilst others want only online academic work and no practical tasks others want all practical and no academic.

The government updated their guidance on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> Jan to say that schools need to provide a minimum of 4 hours work per day for each KS2 child and a minimum of 3 hours for a KS1 & EYFS child. Obviously, this is very subjective, as pupils all work at different speeds. Staff are providing age appropriate work coupled with both extension and support activities alongside. I appreciate how hard it is to home school your children and do not want parents making themselves or their children ill with stress, worrying about completing every single bit of work provided. Please use your judgement about what and how much you are asking your child to complete at home.

All staff are here to help – please feel free to ring or email questions to school, I appreciate your patience we are still in the process of setting up the online Teaching and Learning platform.

Obviously with 472 pupils registered in school, it is not practicable to print and hand deliver every child a paper pack to their home address every single week and whilst I know that if you have several children it is hard, we simply ask that you do the best you possibly can, could one child be doing something practical whilst the other one is completing a task and vice versa? I do not have the answers for everyone and sadly, I will not please everyone, but please be assured we are doing everything we can to support you all. We are currently investigating various online learning platforms which will enable you to submit work without printing it.

### **Packs of resources to support home learning**

To support your child's home learning, every class teacher has produced a pack of resources to support your child at home eg. An exercise book to record all of the work in which your child completes at home, reducing the need to print worksheets at home, various Maths and English learning resources, pencils, rubbers etc. If you would like to collect your child's pack from school between Mon – Wed this week please come to the front office to do so. If you are unable to do so, on this occasion we will hand deliver the remainder to your homes on Thur and Fri, but obviously we cannot deliver everything every week, there would be no staff left in school to teach the children who are here.

### **FSM**

The school office is currently working on the best way to support our families who are in receipt of FSM, but whose children are currently at home. There is discussion about whether a government backed food parcels would be better for each family. As soon as we know we will contact the relevant families this week.

### **SVP**

If you are struggling, in the current lock down, then please do not hesitate to contact school. We have access to some amazing people through the SVP group at church who are able to help.

### **Reception Place Application (Sept 2021)**

The deadline of the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021, to apply for a place for your child to start Reception in Sept 2021, is fast approaching. [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk) Please pass the word around to all your friends and families as we do not want anyone who would like to apply to miss the deadline.

### **And finally,**

Of course we want all of our children back in school as soon as possible, so to help us do this, please follow all the government rules and minimize all of your contacts with other people at all times. As the new vaccine center opens at the 'Centre for Life' in Newcastle, we hope and pray that we may be starting to see the end of this dreadful pandemic.

I continue to keep you and all of your families in my thoughts and prayers during this challenging time.

Best wishes,

*A D Thorpe*

Mrs A. D. Thorpe  
Head teacher