



8 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

**Re: Update COVID-19 clarification points**

I writing to give you an update in response to COVID-19 and to hopefully clarify some of what you may have experienced as mixed messages from announcements yesterday regarding which groups of pupils can access school.

There was a very clear message given by the Prime Minister on the evening of Monday 4 January 2021, that explained the need for a third national lockdown, due to a new strain of the COVID-19 Coronavirus being more transmissible than the original strain of Coronavirus. It has been explained that the reason for closing schools except for vulnerable and children of critical (key) workers is because this decision is part of the stay at home message to help minimise the risk of transmission of the new strain. It has been widely reported that although children and young people tend to develop mild symptoms of COVID-19, the transmission rate of the new strain may impact on families and communities more severely by being passed between pupils in schools.

The message given by Gavin Williamson; Secretary of State for Education is that a broader category of pupils can return to school. It has always been the case that Government have developed a very clear message that schools have to have high quality "Remote Learning" in place to support the campaign for pupils to stay at home and to not return to school. In fact, the Department for Education have instructed Ofsted to inspect schools to ensure they do provide this quality educational provision. We have been providing laptops for pupils and continue to do so through the Government funded scheme which provides for a limited number of devices; if more devices are funded, we will increase this provision.

Clearly there is a contradictory message of closing schools to help reduce the spread of the new strain of the virus alongside the message that more pupils are put into the category of vulnerable and allowed to return to school. If numbers of pupils attending school increases significantly, then there are greater numbers able to give opportunity for transmission of the new strain.

**School reopening and Implementation of safety measures**

Since 20 March 2019, we have remained open for vulnerable and children of critical (key) workers and ensured that we are a COVID-19 Secure environment; you may recall me writing to explain that we had a site visit from the Health & Safety Executive in the autumn term and they approved the measures we had in place with no recommendations.

Each lockdown has brought with it new challenges which, for this third national lockdown, is the balance between supporting the stay at home instruction to reduce the transmission of the new strain with members of staff providing "Remote Learning" lessons alongside providing in-school provision including lessons, break, lunchtime and other duties for children who need to come into school.

I wish to thank members of staff for their commitment to making each part of our response to the challenge effective and to thank our parents, carers for their continued support as well as our pupils who have once again responded positively to the changes of a third national lockdown.

I appreciate that there is advice and guidance which gives a mixed message and I hope I have helped to clarify some key points. There is one final clarification which has always been in the advice and guidance from the DfE - the children of critical (key) workers do not have to come into school if it is safe for them to work from home. I have written previously with the guidance from the NSPCC that explains

that children can be at home if it is a safe environment and they can access work. For pupils who have restricted access to IT, we can provide packs of work. If it is felt that you would like your child to be in school and you are a critical (key) worker then please email [enquiries@titussaltschool.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@titussaltschool.co.uk) from your work email address; if you have already done this and your child is attending school then you do not need to send another email.

Once again, there may be further advice and guidance from either the Prime Minister or the Education Secretary which may have bearing upon points I have raised in this letter. If you have any concerns about any of what is contained in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me at school. Once again, I wish to thank you for your continued support as we work effectively together in these challenging times.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Morrel', written in a cursive style.

Ian Morrel  
Headteacher