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Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are now entering our second week of the Spring term and are pleased that we have been able to get into a new routine, offering in school provision and online remote teaching and learning to all our pupils at home.

As you will know, under the latest National Lockdown restrictions, schools are only open to vulnerable children and children of critical workers. We have had a number of requests for places in school and it is important that these places are offered based on the government guidelines and significant need.

The current rate of transmission of the virus means that we must do everything that we can to protect our school community - pupils, parents and staff - by ensuring social distancing can be maintained at all times. This involves lessening the numbers and limiting the contacts and it is, therefore, vital that we continue to keep staff and pupils as safe as possible in light of the current National lockdown and Tier 5 restrictions.

The Local Authority have provided the following information for prioritising the allocation of places:

**Priority 1: Vulnerable pupils**

**Priority 2: Critical Workers (priority to Health, Social Care and Education – in this order).**

The guidance from the Department for Education was updated at the end of last week stating that '*children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can attend school **if required***' and '*parents and carers who are critical workers **should keep their children at home if they can***'.

We understand that working from home at the same time as looking after children is difficult, but we must stress that places in school for critical worker children must be just for those that have **no other childcare options**. Therefore, we ask that you only request a place **if there is no-one else** at home or part of your support/childcare bubble that can care for your child/children.

Many of our critical workers, particularly hospital and frontline medical staff, will be working additional hours and covering multiple shifts and we want to ensure that we prioritise those with the most urgent need.

To support home learning, staff are continuing to provide a range of online and paper-based activities which are the same as those which are taking place in the school bubbles. This means that all children are accessing the same curriculum and supports them to avoid falling behind. The staff are making welfare calls to all families this week so you will be able to discuss any issues in person. You can also contact school or your child's teachers through Tapestry, Google Classroom or SeeSaw if you have any questions or issues regarding home learning. Zoom sessions are also in place for children to ask questions about their learning from the teacher. Parent workshops on remote learning have also been taking place. Please attend these if you are unsure of how to help your child/children.

Please take the time to carefully review your situation and consider only requesting a place in school **if and when it is absolutely necessary in order to carry out your critical worker role**.

As ever, thank you for your continued patience and understanding at this time.