

My Ref: JP / TK 002

Date: 6 January 2021

Dear Parent / Carer

National lockdown – open letter to parents and carers

We start this letter with a thank you to parents, carers and family members for your patience, understanding and support for your school, since the first lockdown in March last year.

On Monday 4 January the Prime Minister announced a new national lockdown until February half term. The Department for Education has provided initial guidance for schools, which can change as the government publishes further information and clarification.

Since Tuesday, schools and academies have been working to make arrangements to stay open for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers only and for remote learning for those pupils who are not in school. The speed of the change is challenging, so please be patient, whilst your school's arrangements are being put in place.

Schools are receiving increased requests for the children of critical workers to attend school. The size, layout and staffing in each school are different, which limits the numbers of children that can attend school safely. Where not enough places are available, schools must prioritise when children can attend and, as a last resort, will have to tell some critical workers that there is no capacity for their children to attend.

We are grateful for the tremendous response of our school leaders, teachers, support staff, governors and trustees to date. We will continue to support schools and trust our school leaders to make the decisions for their own school and pupils but we recognise that, currently, our schools and our parents are in a difficult position.

Yours sincerely

**Jonathan Price**
Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)**Helen Riley**
Deputy Chief Executive Director for
Families and Communities