

11th January 2021,

Dear Parent/Carer,

As you are aware, the school has to remain open to provide care for the children of critical workers. At present, we have almost 40% of our Chantry children in school and we are struggling to cope with the increasing demand. We have more than twice as many children in as during the first lockdown and each day we have an average of 5 more families phoning us asking for provision. We also care for vulnerable children but they make up a very small percentage of the children currently in school.

This is not sustainable, we want to be able to offer support to all of our families who need it however, the increasing demand for key work spaces is putting additional pressure on already stretched staff. Our upper Key Stage 2 key work bubble is now up to capacity - at 25 children attending on some days. As a Senior Leadership Team, we feel that 25 children in a classroom, is our maximum safe limit in order to protect children, their families and staff. We currently have 7 members of staff isolating which is also putting additional pressure on our team.

When in school, key worker children are working on laptops, supervised by support staff, completing the home learning that our teachers are setting online. Teachers are online throughout the day, teaching and communicating with families. It is important that they have the space and time to be able to deliver good-quality learning for children whilst the school is closed. Therefore, we need to ensure that there are some classrooms free in school for teachers to be able to record lessons in.

We ask that you think very carefully about whether your child/children need to be in school, and the hours that they need to attend. Please only use our key work provision when absolutely essential. Government guidance changed on Friday regarding key worker provision, it now reads 'critical workers should keep their children at home, if they can'. If we have any further requests for our KS2 bubble we will have to look at the list of children attending and prioritise by need e.g. those with both parents who are key workers, single parents who are key workers, NHS workers and those who work in the emergency services being given priority. In future, we will only be admitting children to any of the bubbles from Monday of the following week. Constant daily changes are making it impossible to plan staffing levels.

This is not a decision that we have come to lightly as we want to support all our families who are key workers. We appreciate that this is a very challenging time for you with the pressures of juggling work and home schooling. However, we are in a national lockdown with numbers of Covid cases currently at record levels and it is vital that we ensure Chantry is as safe as possible for the children attending and our staff.

Yours sincerely,

Becky Reed

Becky Reed
Headteacher