



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher Mr S Belbin

Dear Parents/ Carers,

It is with huge sadness and a heavy heart that I am writing to inform you that we are unable to open school tomorrow for any children other than Key Worker children and our vulnerable children from Tuesday 5th January onwards. This means that only the children of key workers and vulnerable children should attend school tomorrow morning. This will be initially be for two weeks.

I realise that it is only a week since I wrote to you and said we would be open, but much has changed. Concerns have been raised about the new variant of Covid which has resulted in an increase in the transmission and infection rates currently being recorded across England. Schools in Tier 4 in the south and London have already been closed, and we know from the news that rates of infection are rising rapidly in our area. Whereas the first lockdown was mainly about infections between adults, the latest information would suggest that children of all ages may be unknowingly and innocently spreading the virus. You might remember my first letters to you back in March about the safety of our children and staff being my highest priority. I don't know at this stage whether our risk assessments can protect our children and staff against the newest variants. The government's own advisers suggested at the end of December that:

"The most recent advice from SAGE is that schools should not open in January other than for children of key workers and vulnerable children. This is because the scientific advice is that it is not safe for schools to open. There are new variants of Covid-19 that are highly infectious and infection rates have increased significantly since schools closed. According to SAGE, the measures that have been in place since September to allow the school to open may no longer be sufficient."

All staff are willing to support our key worker and vulnerable children in school. We will also start home learning once again. Home learning will start tomorrow 5th January via class dojo, and we will be open for key workers and vulnerable children as well.

Our staff are bitterly disappointed that the planning and preparation they had all made for the coming term and the opportunity to welcome our children back has been disrupted in this manner. Additional comments about home learning and about what constitutes vulnerable and key workers is provided below.

I am really, truly sorry that this leaves you having to find alternative arrangements at such a late stage. As always, if you want to contact me please email me at head@st-josephs-lancaster.lancs.sch.uk, or through class dojo.

Yours sincerely,

S. Belbin.

Home Learning

All learning will be through class dojo.

Home learning will be a mixture of consolidation activities and new learning. There will be daily maths and English, with weekly topic and science. RE will be given at least twice a week.

We expect children to register via dojo at 8.55 by sending a message to your class teacher. We will follow up absence through a phone call.

Many of our activities will expect a response from children, whether it be by a photograph or confirmation from you that your children have done their work. We look forward to seeing their work in the learning log.

Key Worker children.

A full list of what constitutes key workers is provided here.

Key worker children will be working on the work set through class dojo during school hours.

We would like children to be in school in school uniform.

We would like to see evidence of where you work and a copy of your work rotas, ideally before your child attends.

Vulnerable children

We will contact you separately about helping your child attend school. We will contact you this week.