

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I am writing to you late this evening, in light of Boris Johnson's announcement of a new national lockdown for England, with emergency measures to control the rapid spread of coronavirus. All schools, across England, have been told to open only for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers from tomorrow until the middle of February 2021, with the provision of remote learning for all children who will be learning from home.

As you are aware, all schools have to comply with instructions laid out by the Department for Education and so the start of the new term will be as follows:

**Tuesday 5 January- February 2021 (Date to be confirmed by the Government): All year groups in KS2 and KS3 will be taught remotely and the children of critical workers and vulnerable children may come into school.**

The office staff have spent time today collating key information from parents/ carers in all year groups in the event that the Government made any further changes to the education system. As a result, we were able to take a calm, considered response, and anticipate seeing all children tomorrow in Years 5-8 whose parents / carers have highlighted that they fall within one of the categories highlighted in bold font below. If you have not already done so, and are a parent/ carer of a child in school who falls into one of the following categories in bold font, who wishes their child/ren to come into school this half term, please can you email the office team on: [office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk)

#### **Children of critical workers**

The government has updated its guidance about which groups of people who are considered to be critical workers as follows:

- Health & Social care workers – doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, other frontline health and social care staff, supply chain staff, producers and distributor of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment
- Education and childcare - teachers/school support staff and childcare staff, specialist educational professionals, social workers
- Key public services – justice system, religious staff, charities and workers delivering frontline services, those responsible for the management of deceased, journalists and broadcasters
- Local and national government – administration involved in the COVID-19 response or those delivering essential public services.
- Food and other necessary goods – food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery and other key goods, for example hygienic and veterinary medicines
- Public safety and national security – police and support staff, MoD civilians, contractor and armed forces personnel critical to the COVID-19 pandemic, fire and rescue staff, National Crime Agency staff, border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles
- Transport – people keeping air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport operating, including supply chains
- Utilities, communication and financial services – banks, building societies, financial market infrastructure, oil, gas, electricity and water/sewerage, information technology and data, nuclear, chemical, telecommunications, postal service, payment providers and waste disposal sectors.

#### **Children who fall into the vulnerable category**

The government definitions for children in this category are those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
  - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services

- adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
- those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
- those living in temporary accommodation
- those who are young carers
- those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example, due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
- care leavers

To ensure consistent bubbles, we would like children who fall in either of these categories to attend each weekday as normal, however, we appreciate that around parents'/ carers' shift patterns this may not always be possible. Please use this email address ([office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk)), to notify us of any changes in relation to your child's attendance in their vulnerable children and children of critical workers bubble.

### **Remote Learning**

This evening, my team have been working incredibly hard to enable us to deliver remote learning to all children from tomorrow via our school's VLE. Mrs Watkins has just forwarded all parents/ carers of children in KS2 the information that was sent out earlier to parents/ carers of children in KS3 about Remote Learning via our ITS Learning Platform, 'live lessons', registration and tutor time. With the support of Mr Faulkner, we have also set up registration and tutor times for every tutor group, which are now in the Teams Calendar ready for the morning and afternoon. All children have logged into this VLE and been shown by staff how to use it during the Autumn term, however a small team of staff will be on hand to talk parents/ carers and children through any queries you or they may have to help resolve any technical issues experienced. Please be assured of our full commitment to provide help and support as we know that this is such a difficult period for everyone.

### **Illness and absence**

If your child is unwell, even when learning from home remotely, please report absence in the normal way by contacting the school: [covid@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:covid@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk). If your child is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19, it is critical that they do not attend school. Instead, please book a COVID-19 test at one of the regional testing centres. Similarly, if any household member is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19, it is vital that your child does not attend school until the household member has a confirmed negative test result.

Thank you for your continued support- as I shared in my letter to you on Sunday night, we will get through this, together.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Deborah Craddock  
Headteacher