

Dear Friends of Stubbins School,

I would first like to wish you a very happy 2021, which I am sure it will be in the fullness of time. What a start to the New Year! I was not anticipating that the Prime Minister's address, at 8pm on Monday evening, would announce the closure of schools the very next day. Strange times!

It has been a difficult week. Many schools were closed on the Tuesday completely in order to organise the Critical Worker provision. We opened and welcomed in those children, along with those children who we consider vulnerable, for a variety of reasons. There were 47 children in school on Tuesday, which quickly rose to 67 children on Wednesday. Staff were becoming concerned about the numbers of children and our ability to keep everyone safe in light of the new COVID strain. Staff with children of their own were reporting that their child's school was being more stringent in asking for proof of Critical Worker Status, and only giving places where both parents were Critical Workers.

Throughout the pandemic, I have striven to be kind and fair, working alongside families and supporting wherever possible. This, however, must be balanced with the wellbeing of my staff and their own families. I found myself in the position of questioning parents about their jobs and asking for evidence of employment. We had concerns that some children were in school when an adult was at home, and again we felt the need to clarify the situation. This has led to some discontent, and I can only hope that you understand the difficult position in which we found ourselves.

A considerable amount of time has been spent gathering together a list of those who require Critical Worker or Vulnerable Child provision. We ranked families in order of priority, which was, frankly, an awful thing to have to do, and braced ourselves to inform parents whether or not they had been offered a place.

Yesterday, I kid you not, the DfE released new guidance. I received the email at 3:47pm. The guidance states: *"We know that every school will have a different number of children of critical workers who need to attend. It is important that on-site provision is provided for these pupils, and **there is no limit to numbers of these pupils who may attend and schools should not limit attendance of these groups.** This is because we are reducing overall social contact across areas and the country rather than individually by each institution."*

This morning I informed parents that all those who have provided evidence of Critical Worker Status, or whose children have been identified as vulnerable, are able to attend school.

There is anxiety amongst staff about the numbers of children who may potentially attend. My plea to all parents who are Critical Workers is to only send your child into school on those days where there is no-one at home who can look after them. **Please communicate with your child's class teacher to confirm which days they will be attending.**



I would like to thank my staff for, once again, stepping up to a very challenging situation, and also thank all of the families of Stubbins for your continued support and understanding. Just as we have always done, we must work together to ensure the safety of all our loved ones.

Stay Well ☺

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Mr. J. Danson