

Priority for School Places

Dear Parents/Carers

Further to previous correspondence, many thanks to those parents who have responded to our request and the city request to keep children at home if you possibly can. This has had an impact on reducing numbers in school on any given day although, for the reasons outlined in previous correspondence, our numbers still remain comparatively high. We have 45% of children on roll in today, as an example, which has realigned the balance so that, on any given day this week, more of our children have been accessing learning remotely from home than have been in school.

We are currently managing to accommodate those numbers with all school staff on site, both supervising children and facilitating home learning. However, we need to be prepared for the possibility that numbers might, in the future, have to be further reduced, either due to greater restrictions from central government or in the event of us no longer having a safe staffing capacity should more staff test positive.

Government guidance states that schools should prioritise places for those children identified by school and/or social care as vulnerable and for children of **“critical worker parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response”**. It is not the case, therefore, that working for a specific organisation automatically entitles a child to a place, particularly if we find ourselves required to reduce numbers of spaces; rather, it would be dependent upon what your specific role is and whether it should be deemed critical to the current emergency situation.

We know that many critical worker employers, including local hospitals are issuing letters to confirm that a specific role is deemed **essential at this time**. If you are in such a role and know that your child being unable to attend school (whether that be full time or on specific working days) would prevent you from undertaking your critical role and thus impact upon the local and national emergency response, **can you please provide a letter from your employer with a specific named person (including their role) and telephone number**. Please send this to criticalworkers@childwallce.com This will allow us to rank priority to be put into place should we have to limit capacity in school. Vulnerable children and children of health workers (in essential roles) will be allocated places before children of other critical workers, as stated in the letter from the local authority forwarded to you on Sunday evening.

We will not be simply capping numbers at any given point and then creating a waiting list (as was the case after June reopening). This is a different situation and, as such, the fact that a child is being accommodated in school at the moment does not mean they will continue to be if numbers are restricted. Likewise, if, as requested, you are managing to keep your child at home currently, this does not mean a space will not be considered moving forwards. This will not be a case of “first come, first served”. We will prioritise, at any given time, according to evidence provided of your critical role and the need for your child to be accommodated in school at that time.

Many thanks for your continued cooperation and we hope and pray that, as a school family, we can continue to support and protect one another and the wider community.

Kind regards

Wendy Mason