



Childwall Church of England Primary School

A Voluntary Aided School, founded by the Trustees of Salisbury House. Within the Diocese of Liverpool

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Good afternoon

I write to advise you that there has been a further positive case of Covid 19 within school, leading to a number of staff being required to isolate. At this point, with some redistribution of roles, I have been able to adhere to our safety risk assessment and keep school open for vulnerable children and for those children who absolutely have no alternative but to attend as there is no adult to keep them safe at home due to parents/carers working in Covid essential roles. However, should our staffing situation reduce any more I can't guarantee this. We may have to move to a model of fewer bubbles and, if numbers remain so high, prioritising roles. We want to avoid this since, ultimately, it should not really be school's responsibility to do this and, after asking for evidence of critical worker status, we have received more than 200 letters from employers, many of which clearly verify that parents are working outside the home in Covid specific roles, eg) in our local hospitals, but others which are using the far broader list of 'key worker' jobs rather than "critical to the Covid response" which is what was requested by ourselves and stated by both national and local leaders.

Again, can I please ask you to consider your individual family needs. The government have updated their guidance this week regarding schools, reiterating the point that **most children should remain at home**, going on to say:

*Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school or college if required, but parents and carers **should keep their children at home if they can.***

*Schools should provide on-site provision for all of their vulnerable children and children of critical workers who **need** to be in school.*

This still leaves us in the situation where we are relying on individual families to determine whether a school place is **needed** - with the stipulation being that any individual should ask themselves the key question, "Can you demonstrate that a place is actually required, with no alternative possible?"

On the one hand, I've got parents who have to work, in the NHS for example, criticising us as a school for 'allowing' so many children into school and being concerned about the risk to their children and families of our high numbers; on the other hand, I have some families who have not done as so many of you have and tried to manage at home, which remains strongly recommended in order to limit community transmission. We also have children who are



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attending full time when we know parents work part time; **it's essential that children remain at home on any day that they can.**

I continually pray that we are moving towards a place where schools can fully open safely and we are all able to socialise and move freely again. However, this is now our 5th reported positive case of Covid 19 in our school community in the past two and a half weeks and I fear that, despite all our robust safety procedures, detailed within our risk assessment and followed by us within school, we are not going to be able to avoid this potentially continuing while numbers of children and, correspondingly, numbers of adults in school on a daily basis remains so high. Positive cases requiring bubble closures (as we had in two year groups last week) also impacts on those essential worker parents who absolutely need to attend work in Covid essential roles and this further affects the community that we all need to pull together to protect.

We also have several instances of different families collecting other families' children from school. Whilst in 'normal' circumstances this might be common practice and we have our lists of adults with permissions to collect, this is likely to be in breach of current national lockdown restrictions which have very clear criteria for avoiding any social mixing, again to reduce community transmission. I have had long conversations this week with our link with public health in the local authority. I have been advised that if we can see that families are not adhering to current restrictions regarding mixing or self-isolating (when required) then I can remove provision of a school place during lockdown to protect those who are in school.

Whilst the local authority stance remains that there is no specified 'safe' number that should be in school, they stressed that I must maintain safety for all who are accessing school during this national lockdown. They said that a critical way to do this is to communicate clearly with families that school should only be accessed by pupils who we have identified as having a specific reason to require a place (sometimes referred to as vulnerable) and **by those families who need to send their children in because there is no possible alternative.** Please help us to be able to maintain a safe environment and safe staffing to ensure that those children for whom access to school is essential can continue to attend and that we are all doing our part to limit community mixing and community transmission every way that we possibly can.

Kind regards

Wendy Mason

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