



~ Every Child Matters Every Day ~

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Head Teacher: Mrs Fiona Feeney

04.01.2021

Dear Parents and Carers

### School Closing as of Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January for all but Critical workers children, EHCP and vulnerable children

I do apologise for all the last minute communications that have transpired over the last couple of days. It has been a very emotive time for everyone – what is safe, who is safe and what is the best thing for everyone to be doing.

Over the weekend I was in touch with all our local schools as well as the Local Authority, in the hope that we could all come up with a clear and considerate plan that supported families, staff and the community as a whole. We had hoped that there would be a clear directive from the Local Authority. As many of you will be aware, with the latest epidemiology and public health advice in mind, the City Council formally wrote to the Secretary of State for Education – in line with the contingency framework for education and childcare settings – to express their concerns and seek Government support on all primary, nursery and special schools in the city moving to remote learning, other than for children of critical workers and vulnerable children.

The government did not reply by the requested mid day deadline but said that it would be unlikely to be sanctioned. However, following a further meeting between the Council Leadership and Public Health on Sunday afternoon, all schools were sent the following information regarding the current situation in the city.

1. *The rate in Wolverhampton is increasing fast and there is no evidence of it slowing*
2. *The rate is currently at 674.7 per 100,000 as at the 31 December 2020. This rate was 337 on 24 December 2020 (In our school area, the figures up to 29.12.20 is 698.4 per 100,000, in Castlecroft next to us it is 749.4 per 100,000).*
3. *Wolverhampton's positivity rate is at its highest point since the pandemic started – 24.3%, in line with many London boroughs*
4. *Over the last 2 weeks we have seen an extreme spike in Covid case numbers, far exceeding anything previously*
5. *Wolverhampton's Covid case rate is seeing a significant increase across all age ranges including children*
6. *Currently our profile is similar to that of London and the South East 2-3 weeks ago*
7. *Based on the current high positivity rate and increasing overall rate, it is highly likely the new more aggressive variant is within the City*

*'Our request to be reviewed under the Contingency Framework was based on the above public health evidence with a view to taking a preventative and proactive approach for a short period in Wolverhampton to stabilise the transmission rates. Moving to a week's remote learning for the majority of pupils would have minimised movement and mixing of families across the city whilst enabling us to support schools in reviewing risk assessments and mobilising a dedicated testing site for school staff'.*

As the city is in Tier 4, we need to ensure we support the community in avoiding the transmission of the virus. **Taking into consideration the evidence provided by the Council, Public Health and the ever increasing rate of transmission in our vicinity of the city, the Governors and Leadership team of the school have taken the decision to move to remote learning for the majority of children from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January.** This is in line with our neighbouring school, who are either not opening after this INSET day, or, like Springdale, if they have opened already to children, will be closing on Wednesday.



We will continue to be open to children of critical workers, EHCP and vulnerable children. Staff are still working on site to teach these children and also teaching online for those at home. Please look at the link given here to see if your child can access school at this time.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

But please do take heed of the guidance that states that **wherever possible, children should be kept safe at home to limit the chance of the virus spreading**. Only those children who absolutely need to attend, should do so, The fewer the amount of children making the journey to school, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect more vulnerable individuals in wider society. **If you have a responsible adult who is at home and can look after the children, please do not send your children in even if you are a critical worker.**

Due to the last notice, if you do think this applies to you, please do send your children in as normal tomorrow. We can then check if there are any children who are not in that we expected or vice versa. **We will expect these children to be in every day as they would normally, not just when you are at work.** This way we can aim for full engagement and progress to be made rather than swapping between school and home learning. After school club will continue to operate as it has been, only for the children who are in school and who normally access it, not additional children or sessions.

Tomorrow there will be activities on Purple Mash/ Tapestry for children to access while we set up more detailed and appropriate remote resources from Wednesday, which we will send out to you. If you do not have the facility to access the home learning remotely, please do phone school or e mail the relevant key stage if you can tomorrow so we can arrange home learning packs for you.

**Those children not in school but who are entitled to FSM will also be contacted, once we know who is coming in tomorrow.**

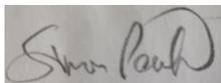
I know this is unwelcome news to many. It is not a decision taken lightly. Staff want to be in school teaching and are prepared to do this, but the risk of transmission within our community is an overriding concern and one highlighted so clearly by the figures, our Council and local Public Health. I can only apologise for the disruption this will cause so many. We will keep this under constant review and be guided by the Council along with all the schools in the area. Please bear with us.

I thank you for your continued support and hope that, with the actions everyone is taking, that we can improve the rate and return to normal as soon as possible.

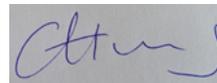
Yours sincerely



F Feeney – Headteacher



Simon Penfold – Co Chair of Govs



Charlotte Harding – Co Chair of Govs

E mail addresses for any messages:

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General enquiries: [warstonesprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:warstonesprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk)

Don't forget – you can now receive a lateral flow test for the virus at the Civic Centre, so you can check if you have the virus and need to isolate, even if you do not show any symptoms.

**What are the restrictions in tier four?**

**The restrictions are similar to the last national lockdown** and include:

**Residents should stay at home, unless they have a "reasonable excuse" such as work or education**

*All non-essential shops must close*

*Hairdressers and nail bars must close*

*Indoor entertainment venues must close*

*Gyms and indoor swimming pools, indoor sports courts and dance studios must close*

**You cannot meet other people indoors, unless you live with them or they are part of your support bubble**

**People should not leave tier four areas or travel abroad, except for limited reasons (including work and education)**

*Weddings and civil partnership ceremonies are only allowed in exceptional circumstances*

**"Clinically extremely vulnerable" people in tier four areas are advised to stay at home "as much as possible". The government says if they can't work from home, they shouldn't go to work.**