



Monday 11th January 2021

Dear Parents,

With the first week of Spring Term under our belts we are glad to have been able to settle relatively smoothly into a new routine, offering in-school provision for our vulnerable children and those from our critical worker families, while providing online remote teaching to all our pupils at home. We have been able to reach this point thanks to the tireless efforts of staff in preparing and improving our systems while adapting to ever-changing circumstances.

What is clear from last week, however, is that the number of pupils eligible to attend school under the critical worker provision is much higher than during the first lockdown. We therefore need to ensure that we can accommodate those most in need whilst recognising that we must continue to do everything that we can to keep staff and pupils as safe as possible in school in light of recent Coronavirus developments.

As I am sure you will understand, running a dual system of educating and supervising children in school, while providing remote learning to those children at home, places an additional logistical staffing burden on the school as teachers are deployed to online teaching whilst staff are still required in the classrooms for those being educated in school. The extremely rapid rate of transmission of the virus at the moment means that we must do everything we can to protect our school community: pupils, parents and staff alike.

The guidance from the Department for Education was updated on the evening of Friday 8th January and a key change made is that parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can.

For our part, we must stress that places in school for critical worker children are finite and we ask that you only take up a place if absolutely necessary. As a community we must ensure that there is space for our healthcare workers' children and other vital roles that are actively helping to fight the pandemic. Many of our critical workers, particularly hospital and frontline medical staff, will be working additional hours and covering multiple shifts and we want to ensure that we prioritise those with the most urgent need.

Accordingly, we are now asking you to review your needs and consider only sending your child to school if it is absolutely necessary in order to carry out your critical worker role. We ask that you specifically consider the following:



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Telephone 020 8643 4428

office@barrowhedges.com

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- In cases where there are two parents, if one parent is able to work from home, or is not working at present, then please keep your child at home and access the remote learning provided on Microsoft Teams or Tapestry for your child.
- Although we previously encouraged parents to send their child to school for the full week, for consistency, if you are able to keep your child at home on some days (not part days please) then please do so.

Some children are currently attending school as 'vulnerable children' and therefore are able to continue to attend each day.

It is our desire to accommodate parents' needs as far as possible whilst keeping children and staff in school safe but, just like other schools, we are balancing difficult priorities. While we have carried out all the required risk assessments and put the relevant procedures in place to keep school safe, we recognise that children find it very difficult, if not impossible, to maintain social distancing. For this reason, if we can find ways to reduce the number of children in school on any day, this would reduce the risk of spreading infection even further. This is particularly pertinent given the new variant of Covid-19 that is spreading so much faster and the 'major incident' being declared by the Mayor of London.

Please review your own situation in light of the above and send any updates to us as soon as possible, but no later than 10am on Wednesday 13th January via office@barrowhedges.com to enable us to plan for the days and weeks ahead.

Thank you in advance for your help and support in this matter.

Keep safe and well.

Kind regards,



Mrs Louise Wood
Headteacher

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