



10 January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Critical Worker Parents and Carers at Greenway

As the Governing Body of Greenway, we would first like to thank you for the overwhelmingly positive comments and expressions of gratitude to staff since the start of term last week – those are much appreciated.

I trust you will have gathered from the media that schools are facing considerable and unprecedented challenges, with a deluge of, often competing, demands and guidance from Government that can change daily and sometimes several times a day. Of particular note, is one addition, from Friday evening, which added the following words to the existing guidance on critical workers: ‘...***parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.***’ This, of course, came after a week of growing concern about the numbers of children who have returned to schools and the risks that poses to efforts to reduce community transmission across the country.

In light of this revised guidance and because it is increasingly clear that school children (even the youngest of them) were contributing to transmission of Covid-19 pre-Christmas, we are asking that all those who have identified themselves as critical workers now review their position with particular reference to the definitions of critical workers in the context of the overarching intention of the Government [guidance](#) that in accessing this provision your ‘...***work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response***’.

Greenway remains entirely committed to accepting in school all children who are either vulnerable (which school is responsible for identifying) or those where either parent has a critical worker role which means that it is not possible for them to support their children with remote learning at home.

However, if we are to continue to keep these children and their families (and our staff) safe to the best of our ability - particularly with the widespread circulation in this region of the new variant of the virus – it seems sensible to assume that we must keep numbers in school to the absolute minimum to reduce the likelihood of transmission. We are therefore expecting that if you are working from home

as a critical worker or have another adult in the house who is not a critical worker, your child may be able to access remote learning from home. We do appreciate the numbers of you who have already taken this step, despite having confirmed that at least one adult in the household met the critical worker definition.

To provide some context to our request, it is worth noting that in the first lockdown last March, Greenway parents did not require any provision at all. When we reached the partial return to school in June, we accepted a total of 18 children. As of Friday, and minus the return of Nursery class (for operational reasons) we had over 40 children in school most days.

At this point, with provision at the current levels, we can only reiterate that with some staff unwell and staffing stretched to the utmost limit already, there is absolutely no spare staffing capacity. Should a further member of staff fall ill, whether to Coronavirus or any other illness, we will have to consider the operational viability of provision, as we already had to do with Nursery class.

We do appreciate how much all families are likely to be struggling not least with work commitments and/or remote learning as well as their own personal family circumstances and also that circumstances can change quickly. We also appreciate the risks that staff are taking in coming into school not least to support the critical worker bubbles. Therefore, although we are seeking to reduce overall numbers, if at any point you feel that you do need provision or additional support, please continue to make contact with the school via admin@greenway.herts.sch.uk.

You should also use the email above to let us know if you find you can now manage remote learning at home when you previously had a critical worker place in school – clearly the sooner you are able to do this the better. We do appreciate however that you are receiving this letter on a Sunday evening and anticipate that it may take you a few days to consider your own family's position.

We hope you will accept this letter in the spirit it is intended and share with us our determination to reduce transmission as quickly and as effectively as we can so that there is no delay in our safely welcoming back all your children to school at the earliest opportunity.

Do stay safe and where you can, please follow the Government's message and stay at home.

Regards,

Elizabeth O'Reilly

Chair of Governors of Greenway Primary & Nursery School on behalf of the Greenway Governing Body

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