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# Lunsford Primary School

27 January 2021

Dear Parents and Families,

Thinking back, I think few of us would have anticipated that 2021 would start with such a similar scenario as the first lockdown last spring, but here we are again, this time with the additional challenge of the darker winter days and not having been able to see family and friends over Christmas and for such an extended period of time. The information shared today from the news is that schools will not be open until 8<sup>th</sup> March at the earliest. Obviously, that is dependent on many factors still and that the Department of Education (DfE) will give schools two weeks' notice to return to school. We will obviously keep you posted with as much information as possible over the coming weeks. Though this is not our first time in lockdown, this time there seems to be many more challenges - increased anxiety over home schooling, greater work pressures as well as the ongoing worry of keeping our loved ones safe.

I wanted to write to repeat a similar message to last spring and that is to reiterate, ***please just do what you can, your best is good enough***. So many of you are juggling home schooling with home working and caring responsibilities. School exists for a reason and it is no easy task to replicate this at home; we know that learning from a screen is not the same as being in class with your teacher alongside your friends. We know that many of you simply don't have the time during your working day to spend with your child(ren) however much you want to. We know that for some of you, your children simply do not engage with learning at home in the way they do at school. We also know that for some of you the technology is an enormous barrier before you've even begun to deal with the learning. Again, if you need an additional device or extra data at home please contact the office. We have additional devices to loan out to families if needed and we also have SIM cards with data on them for you to have if that is a struggle for you. However, we also know that many of you are coping brilliantly, have learnt new skills and are managing well.

DfE guidance requires us to set a minimum amount of work per day; 4 hours for Key Stage 2 and 3 hours for Key Stage 1, but this does not mean that you must complete all this work every day. Of course, we would encourage you to do so, as any school would, but please **do not worry** if you cannot manage this. Some days will be better than others, some children will enjoy the routine of home learning but others will struggle, please **just do what you can**. It is, as always, difficult to get it right for everyone - for some it's too much, for others it's not enough and for the lucky ones it's just right! Whatever situation you find yourself in, please know that we are here to support you in whatever way we can.

If it is a case of selecting just some work to do, we would ask that you prioritise English and Maths where possible, however it may be you feel you need to select Art or P.E. instead for your child's wellbeing and that is fine too. It is so important that we once again recognise the challenges we are facing as a community and that we are kind to one another and to ourselves. No

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one wants the children to miss out on any learning but at the moment, as a society, we have other priorities. Please be assured that, when all children can return to school, we will do our very best to help them settle back into their routines and learning and, indeed, it is worth remembering that they have many years to do this. I would also like to reassure you that those children who are in school are following the same learning as those at home (supervised by school staff rather than parents).

### Which pupils should come into school?

During this lockdown we are experiencing increasing numbers of families requesting their child to return to school. Whilst we would love to be in a position to have all the children back, unfortunately we are unable to do so. With hospital admissions still at such a worrying level and huge numbers of deaths and positive cases reported daily, it is essential we all follow the government guidelines about only leaving home for essential reasons and do everything we can to protect our families, our community and the NHS. Currently we have over 80 children accessing the school which is well above the local and national percentages for primary school children.

Government guidance states that only vulnerable children and the children of critical workers should attend school and that critical worker **'parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can'**. Vulnerable children include those pupils with an EHCP, families supported by Children's Social Services, pupils living in temporary accommodation and pupils who have significant difficulties engaging with remote education.

We all remain incredibly grateful to those essential workers on the front line, who are dealing with the full impact of this pandemic and so we remain committed to helping you as best we can by providing a place in school for your children, if there is no safe alternative. However, we would discourage parents from sending their children to school unless absolutely necessary, for example if both parents are critical workers and are unable to work at home.

If you are able to access additional childcare through a childcare bubble, or if one parent/carer is able to work from home we would encourage you to keep your children at home with you. We do understand and appreciate the difficulties this may cause and we are not trying to cause any additional problems or stress but the current arrangements are in place to try and limit the spread of the virus by keeping pupil numbers in school to a minimum and therefore reducing transmission. We are doing all we can to reduce the risk that we expose our staff and the children of critical workers to. Staff will begin to test themselves twice a week using the lateral flow tests given to all schools from the Department of Education. We continue to do everything we can in keeping your children and our staff safe in school so we are able to support you and your children. If you have no alternative, please discuss this with the Senior Leadership Team at school. There is also no expectation for the children of critical workers to be in school every day and we know the majority will not need to attend school five full days a week.

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Although life remains challenging at the moment, hopefully there are better days in sight; the vaccine is being rolled out, spring will come and our children will continue to grow and thrive in so many different ways.

In the meantime, we ask you to :-

- Please be **kind** to yourselves and each other.
- Please do everything you can to keep yourselves, your loved ones and our community **safe**.

Let's embrace the shared **responsibility** on us all to get through this together.

Thank you for all your ongoing support.

Best wishes,

Mr G Anscombe  
Headteacher