Dear Parent/Carers

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER IS DUE TO MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT AT 8PM TONIGHT SO THE CONTENT OF THIS LETTER IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE, DEPENDING ON THE CONTENT OF THAT SPEECH.**

I hope you have had as good a festive period, and start to the new year, as possible in spite of the unusual and significant challenges and restrictions that are in place. I thought it would be useful to communicate with you all, based on the current situation and measures. I suspect you will know much of this information since it is receiving considerable media coverage.

**As things stand (on 4.1.2021)**

* The school is open for pupils on Monday 4th January 2021.

**A reminder of the established measures we need everyone to continue to follow when pupils return:**

* Please adhere to the established, staggered start and end to the day (see website). Please time your arrival for this measure to be effective; if you arrive too early, bubbles will end up mixing.
* To keep numbers in the yard as low as possible, we continue to ask that only one adult enters the schoolyard to drop off and/or collect your child.
* Please socially distance from staff and other households whilst on the school site, and as you arrive and leave.
* Please wear a face covering on the yard as an extra precaution. We are grateful that most adults are doing this. It is important because it is difficult to maintain distance at times on the yard when it is busy.

I do understand that there has been some frustration regarding having to move off yards and wait outside the perimeter of the building until the correct time (if you have more than one child) during the morning drop off. I have put these measures in place to keep you and your children as safe as possible, and I thank you all for your understanding

**Additional new information to be aware of:**

* The North East of England (like most areas) has been placed in Tier 4. You can find out about Tier 4 restrictions on the .gov.uk website

The Department for Education has produced new “[School contingency plans to be implemented as cases rise.](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/school-contingency-plans-to-be-implemented-as-cases-rise)” This is in response to rapidly rising case rates due to the new, more transmissible variant of coronavirus.

Much of this new guidance applies to secondary schools (e.g. staggered return, rapid testing). However, the framework also includes the option to move primary (including first) schools to remote education should rates of incidence or transmission of the virus in a local area require it. This option has already been put in place in some areas of the country (mostly in London and the South East) so it is reasonable to plan on the basis that more primary schools in Tier 4 areas **may** also have to move to remote education. The decision to move schools to remote education is led by the Health Secretary and Education Secretary and is not one taken by individual schools.

**Actions and preparations in response to the change of tier and the new contingency plans:**

 School leaders have continually reviewed the school risk assessments (including consulting with staff) as part of this process, and will continue to do this. You may notice (and we will advise you of any) changes in the measures we (including staff, pupils and parents) need to make.

**Actions for close contacts of a confirmed case:**

School leaders and teaching staff are ready to offer home/remote learning to close contacts of confirmed cases. If case rates continue to rise, due to the new, more transmissible variant of coronavirus, it is likely that more pupils will need to self-isolate and that the school will have to manage a rise in the number of cases in school. When there are confirmed cases in school, as a precaution, close contacts are required to self-isolate for 10 days and, in such a situation, we are able to offer home/remote learning at very short notice.

Unfortunately, if you choose to keep your child at home we cannot offer online learning. The government has produced a website called the thenational.academy which allows you to access appropriate lessons for your child for a short period of time.

**Actions if the school is instructed to move to remote education, should rates of incidence or transmission of the virus in a local area require it:**

In this situation, we are back to something similar to that experienced between March and July 2020, with school closed to most pupils (hopefully for a much shorter period). In this situation, we are able to move to a dual system with eligible pupils continuing to attend school but also comprehensive home/remote learning and communication for pupils not attending school.

If the school is instructed to move to remote education, then further information will be required to establish which vulnerable children, and which children of critical workers, would continue to be eligible to attend school. In order to gather this information in advance of any instruction to move to remote learning, we have developed a form that parents/carers must use to indicate if they believe that their child is eligible for a place on this basis. Completing the form will allow us to plan appropriately for the children who are eligible.  If you require a link for this form, please contact school via email office@wallsendjubileeps.org.uk and a link will be sent to you. Please note you have until 5pm tomorrow Tuesday 5th January 2021 to respond.

I hope you understand that the situation and range of measures is subject to regular review (and change) so we will continue to update you accordingly. We will do this via the new Parentmail app and the school website.

Yours sincerely

Mr D Harrison