

Thursday 7th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will be aware following the Prime Ministers announcement on Monday night, mainstream schools are closed to most students until at least the February half term.

We have been told that specific guidance for special schools is being produced, but until then we should provide face to face education if we can, but **if parents choose not to send their child to school this will continue to be recorded as an authorised absence as it was this week.**

All schools require a minimum number of staff to be available on site to operate safely and this is even more critical in special schools. At the moment there are a number of factors impacting on staff's ability to attend work. This means that I will have to limit the number of students we are able to have in school each day.

We are moving back to the system we had in place prior to the summer holidays. Following this model, every child is able to access school for at least 2 days each week.

Those students who are the children of keyworkers will be prioritised for places in school and will be able to attend school for 5 days next week.

All other students will be offered 2 days in school, except for a small number of students in specific circumstances where more days may be available.

There is no requirement on parents and carers to take up this offer and each family will have their own particular circumstances to take into account when deciding whether or not to send their child to school.

We will continue to provide remote learning for students at home and we will provide free school meal vouchers for those eligible students who are not accessing school full time.

The lower numbers in school each day will enable social distancing to be applied more often in classrooms, however the needs of our students mean that social distancing is often hard for them to understand and put into practice.

Pastoral staff will be contacting you later today or tomorrow to discuss your child's attendance at school next week.

If you have any questions or concerns, please raise them with your child's pastoral team, or contact school and ask to speak to a member of the senior staff team.

Yours sincerely

Karen Hamilton