

Dear Parents and Carers

11<sup>th</sup> January 2021

I hope that this email finds you well and having enjoyed a restful weekend.

It seems that I am writing to you almost every day at the moment, something that I believe to be an indicator regards the volatility of the situation.

The reason I am writing today relates to an important change in Government guidance. It is regrettable that the DfE issued this guidance at 5:30pm on a Friday evening rather than first thing Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January. The guidance now clearly states that children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school or college if required, **but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.**

The DfE has issued this advice as a direct result of the number of children who were present in primary schools last week, which was far higher than during the lockdown in March. For some of you, we understand that your work is of such critical importance that your child absolutely has to be in school. However, if you qualify as a critical worker, but can manage to have your children at home, please do this, and let your school know.

Your cooperation will help schools reduce potential transmission of Covid-19 by minimising the numbers in school and ensuring staff have the capacity to support the home learning of all other pupils. All Waterton schools continually update their risk assessments according to staff absence etc. Headteachers are having to make very difficult decisions about how to balance the number of children and staff in school to reduce transmission, with the need to ensure that critical workers are supported and the most vulnerable children are kept safe. The uncertainty around staffing and demand means that going forward we may not be able to offer everyone who meets the criteria of a critical worker a place for their child. We are currently working through the detail regards how prioritisation administration may look and hope to communicate further details later in the week.

I fully appreciate that this may cause disruption and inconvenience to some parents and I truly do sympathise. However, it is only by working together, balancing out and hopefully reducing these pressures that we will get through this. Thank you for your continued understanding and support, and please take care and stay safe.

Yours Sincerely



Mr D Dickinson OBE  
CEO  
Waterton Academy Trust