

Abbey School

an Academy within Nexus MAT

Little Common Lane, Kimberworth, Rotherham, S61 2RA

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Executive Headteacher: Mrs Luci Windle

Head of School: Mr Wayne Askham



INSPIRE...BELIEVE...ACHIEVE

Update For Families 11.01.2021

Dear Families,

I hope this letter finds you safe and well. As you will recall, I wrote alongside the CEO of our Trust last week to explain that the guidance for Special Schools seemed to be different to mainstream schools, however we have always given you the choice to keep your child safely at home without repercussion in terms of their attendance. We also agreed to provide them with online education much like the first lockdown. In this, every child whether they are physically in school or learning at home, are following the online curriculum. There has been some lovely comments that I have read from families offering support at this challenging time, particularly when you report you have 'trust in school' my response to you is always the same 'you need to trust everyone else is doing the right thing'.

For those families that are sending their child into school, we respectfully ask you to strictly follow the Government guidance and National Lockdown rules. It is with great sadness that I learn that some families are not following the National Lockdown rules and are continuing to send their child into school, potentially risking other children and staff's health alongside the families they are going home to. The new strain of the virus is well documented to be much more transmissible than previous strains. This means the likelihood of the virus being spread in schools, and ultimately into your homes, is high when National Lockdown rules are not being followed.

I am writing to remind you of the rules, whether we agree with them or not in principal, we have to follow them if we want to firstly have a school offer that also protects staff who are at increased risk of illness. Children may not experience the typical Covid symptoms that are being reported in the press, the range of symptoms are varied and personal to individuals which means tracking the virus is incredibly challenging. Staff who get Covid however do get sick and may not be able to support your child if they themselves are unwell or have to look after family members because they have taken the virus home from our school. **We urge you to please follow the rules correctly.**

You must only leave your home for the following reasons-

Emergency food supplies

To seek medical help

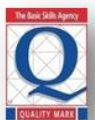
To attend medical appointments

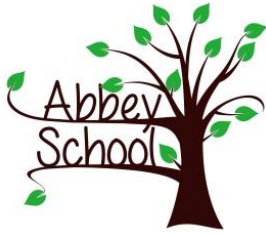
To flee from a violent household

To exercise once per day

For work where you cannot work from home

You **MUST** wear a mask in public places and on public transport





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You must not -

Have play dates

Visit other households or mix with other families

Sleepover out of the family home

As yet, none of the staff have access to a vaccine which will keep them safe. We have started testing with staff in school however, the tests do not replace the hand washing, cleaning regime, mask wearing that happens every day in school. You must dress your child in clean clothes every day to ensure transmission from the home environment is limited. Also following strict hygiene at home for example, washing hands before your child gets on the school bus and encouraging them to wear a mask on the school bus.

Families often report to us they only want staff to keep their children safe, my plea to you all today is for you to keep my staff safe by thinking about what you are exposing your own family to. It is not very often that I feel the need to write in such a negative manner to families but I have a lot of anxious staff going above and beyond in their roles and personal life so that your children can be safely educated so feel I need to ask you to replicate these actions within your homes also.

I will be writing towards the end of the week to assess the need for school places from the 18th January. The guidance states that children are safer at home and I will continue to approve the attendance of those children who are accessing online education as I believe you should all have a choice on whether you send your child to school or not. Should we find ourselves in a position whereby we have exceeded safe numbers in school we will be focusing on front line workers and those children who we have strong evidence in school are classed as vulnerable and could be at risk from staying at home. We may also have to move towards a part time timetable for some children, should the need be great, working on a fortnightly rota.

I fully appreciate the challenges of having to educate your children at home however, we are facing unprecedented times with the virus, in reality the Covid numbers we once saw on the news reports are starting to become names and the names starting to be people that we know. Please think before sending your children to school and ensure you explore every possibility in keeping your child safe at home instead.

If you have any questions or concerns please do call school and speak to a member of staff.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs L Windle

Executive Headteacher

