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Sunday 3rd January 2021

Delayed return to school

Dear Parents, Carers and children,

Firstly, I want to wish you all a very Happy New Year! It is not the start to a new year that I would have wanted, as you can imagine.

You will be aware that there has been considerable concern about the return to school tomorrow. It is a rapidly changing situation and I am so very sorry that as usual during this pandemic, so many things are left to the last minute with U-turns and changes of policy which leave people unsure about what is happening.

The rise in the rate of infection, especially with this new variant of covid-19, is rapid. At this point nearly 75,000 people have lost their lives and the daily death toll has been up to 964 some days this week.

A very high number of parents have been emailing me to express how worried they are about the return to school and asked for their children to remote learn instead. I am not surprised by these numbers and understand their concerns.

The scientists and SAGE say that schools should not open. Other parts of the UK have taken the decision not to reopen schools yet. However, the government are insisting that English schools are safe. They are not listening to the science, nor aligning with the other countries in the UK. The impact of the Christmas period mixing has not had time to show as yet.

I am sorry to let you know that we have many staff who are unable to attend school at this time, whether it is through pregnancy, being Extremely Clinically Vulnerable (ECV), on long term sick, are isolating due to covid or who are following the advice of their unions.

I have had to take the decision to close the schools tomorrow (Monday 4th January) to all but Critical Worker's children in order to assess whether we are safe to reopen with the staffing levels we have, how to organize groups of children so that we can maintain bubbles with reduced staffing, how to provide children with remote learning while at the same time teach the rest of the class and to re-evaluate the whole school risk assessment in light of the rapidly increasing covid rates in Bowthorpe and the surrounding areas.

If your child attended school during the first lockdown as a Critical Worker's child and you have no other arrangement that you can use, please contact the school office email address (above) by 8pm to let us know that your child will be attending school tomorrow.

Please keep an eye out for communications from school tomorrow as things are changing all the time.

Yours sincerely,

HJ McCarney

Mrs H McCarney
Headteacher