

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you, your families and loved ones are all safe and well and have been able to enjoy the holidays.

Following the announcements by the Secretary of State and the Department for Education on December 30th, which placed Newcastle in Tier Four, I am writing to update you on the arrangements for the first week of the new term, which begins tomorrow, January 5th 2021.

You will be aware that some primary schools located in tier four, are currently closed to all but vulnerable pupils and children of parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus response (critical/key workers). Newcastle primary schools, despite being in tier 4, have been advised to open to all pupils from today, Monday 4th January. However, the National Education Union which represents teachers is taking a firm stand on behalf of their members and has advised them to not work in schools for the next 2 weeks. This is due to safety concerns following our region's move to Tier 4 restrictions and the increase in cases nationally, the new strain of coronavirus and its increased likelihood of transmission. The result for our school is that we will not be able to fully open for all pupils on Tuesday 5th January. **We will be only be open from Tuesday 5th January to Friday 8th January for vulnerable pupils and children of critical/key workers.**

The Government defines **critical workers** in this context as parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response including those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors. The School is very happy to support parents whose work meets these definitions and ask that only parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response send their children to School between Tuesday 5th and Friday 8th January under these arrangements and that, if they intend to do so, they notify School as soon as possible by telephone.

Further detail on 'vulnerable' children and critical workers is available [here](#). **It remains very important that children who experience coronavirus symptoms and/or who are otherwise required to isolate must not attend school and that parents inform the School of these circumstances as soon as possible.** The email to use is: Covid.wingrove@wingrove.newcastle.sch.uk

During this time, all teaching and learning will be provided remotely for ALL other classes and year groups. It is not expected that lessons will be 'live' although all children should receive the equivalent levels of activity and content and follow the timetable that they would have had in school during this week. I have suggested to staff that they pre-record bite size lessons which will be supplemented by links to specific websites appropriate to age, ability and the Wingrove curriculum. It is vital, therefore, that all parents and carers ensure that their children have access to the learning platforms, Class Dojo in Nursery, Reception and Year One, and Seesaw for all other year groups. We encourage parents to inform school immediately if any difficulties are faced in using the platforms.

I appreciate that this is very short notice, but the decisions made by central Government have been made very late in the day and therefore subsequent communications from NEU members have also created a very tight timescale in which to conduct meetings and make School- based decisions. We will continue to support you and your children in every way we can and we hope you can support your children to continue their learning online if they are not attending school. We will be reviewing our risk assessment during this week whilst we make plans for next week, and we will keep you informed of any further developments.

Thank you once again for your continuing support.