

18 Appleton Court  
Wakefield  
WF2 7AR

8<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent / Carer

I hope you are all keeping well and safe.

Please can I take this opportunity to explain the key worker group situation across the Enquire Learning Trust?

The aim of this lockdown is to reduce the amount of contacts as much as possible in order to limit transmission of Coronavirus and allow the NHS to cope with the new variant. This has led to schools closing and the requirement for schools to provide a key worker and vulnerable group offer. I am very concerned that with the number of children coming into school, the amount of contact may not be being reduced to the extent we need it to for our community. Currently we have 42% of the children in school (some year groups have reached 50%); this will still mean a lot of transmission risk between children, adults working in school and yourselves as you come to drop off or pick up. It is for this purpose I am asking you to really consider the reason you are requesting a place. The key worker and vulnerable group is for those parents who are required to work and believe they have no other option but to use this offer. The guidance still states that the Key Worker places are for those children's parents whose **'work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response'** and that **'Parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can'**. This offer should only be taken up as a last resort.

I understand that these are difficult times, but this group should not be used for convenience or to make working from home easier. Therefore, please be aware that we **may** have to consider the number of children coming into school and start to ask for confirmation of your situation and detail for your requirement for using the group. We may also offer an alternative local school to groups of children, or any other requests that come in, now that we are reaching the capacity outlined in our Risk Assessment. We would prefer not to have a situation where we have to prioritise occupations or set criteria to help us distinguish people's needs; we want to be able to support our community the best way we can but must continue to remain safe. We also must ensure that we reduce the numbers of children enough to be effective in doing our small part in the National efforts to rapidly reduce the spread of the virus.

Additionally, not only is the safety of my staff important, but the workload is a very important concern. Staff are now required to undertake the remote learning for their class under the expectations now in place, as well as supervise a key worker and vulnerable group and teach the full curriculum in school. You can imagine that this is

an incredibly difficult demand to meet but that, as always, the staff at Dowson want to meet this to the best of their abilities and ensure all children get the best we can offer. I do not want the school to become so overwhelmed and run at full capacity putting adults at risk and potentially losing staff due to illness and groups being closed.

May I take this opportunity to remind you that, under the new guidance, you can form an informal childcare bubble between two households for the purpose of allowing more children to remain at home. This would reduce not only your child's contacts – and therefore yours – but would support schools efforts to ensure everyone's safety at the same time.

For the children who are accessing school, please note the following information:

- Though, we endeavour to have children with a teacher and in their own year group for their school day, numbers may mean we have to split into smaller groups and a teacher cannot be guaranteed.
- Maintaining the same group may not be possible for all children throughout the duration of the lockdown depending on circumstances, though for safety reasons we will always try to at least have a weekend break before changing these.
- The school offer is full time in order to ensure continuity for both school and the pupil's learning.
- School uniform to be worn.
- Staggered starts and finish times still stand and parents **must** adhere to the one way systems and wear a mask when on school site at all times.
- Lunch can be provided or bring a packed lunch.
- Any further requests for places must be put in writing to [admin@dowson.tameside.sch.uk](mailto:admin@dowson.tameside.sch.uk) and a week in advance of when this is needed.

I understand that this letter has been a little negative and I apologise. However, I am trying to ensure the safety of everyone in our school community by reducing contact and supporting the government message, which is 'stay at home' if at all possible and remain safe.

Please consider this over the weekend. If you wish to withdraw your child's place in school or have any further queries relating to this matter, please do contact school via the admin email address above and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours,



Darren Holmes  
Chief Executive Officer



Mrs Kathryn Thornburn  
Principal