



15<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Well what a start to term this has been! Thank you, as always, for the many messages of support and gratitude we since school closed to the majority of children yet again. We are more than devastated – as I am sure you are too – that this has come just as children were settling back into school life and routines. However, we must continue to follow the guidance and do everything possible, more stringently than ever, to suppress the virus and allow schools to open up to all pupils again as quickly as it is possible.

I promised to keep in touch with information as and when I have anything to offer you in this respect. Today, there is little more to share. There is much talk and speculation about whether school partial closures will continue beyond the half term. No clear answers are being given on this currently and I suspect it will very much depend on what the data is saying closer to the time. In the meantime, school is here to help as much as we can with all pupils and families, whether at home or in school and will continue to support wherever possible so please do keep in touch.

## Local Statistics

The infection rates in Tameside currently stands at 373 per 100,000 of the population. Nearly 1000 more people tested positive and 15 more people died as a result of the virus in Tameside in the last 7 days. We must continue to do everything we can to keep ourselves, our loved ones, each other and our community safe from Covid 19. The latest guidance around the restrictions in place to help us understand what we can / cannot do, can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>

## Face Coverings and One-way Systems

Please continue to follow our request to wear a face covering whilst on site. Not only does this help to keep everyone safe and instil confidence, it will also go some way towards our ultimate goal of keeping school open!

Whilst we recognise that there are less people on site at the current time, we also ask that you continue to adhere to the one-way systems, ensure social distancing and move along quickly. Although there are some places in school where there is sufficient space to allow the passing of people safely, there are others – such as the sides of the FSU building – which act as a 'pinch point' and is the reason we must maintain this measure of risk reduction at this time.

## Testing and Isolating

If anyone in the household displays symptoms of the virus, **ALL members of the household must immediately isolate** and the symptomatic person book a test. The household must isolate for 10 days or until a negative test is





received. Where a positive test is received, those who remain well at the end of the 10 day period may end isolation. If anyone displays symptoms during the isolation period, they must be tested and begin their 10 days again.

Please **do NOT** send children into school whilst a parent goes for or is awaiting a test result. It is very clear that most children who have the virus do not display symptoms and with the new variant being more transmissible, doing this puts those in school at risk and may have serious and devastating consequences for school and other families.

## Remote Learning Engagement

For those of you at home, thank you for your engagement with the home learning offer so far and your patience with us as we navigate the best ways to ensure as equitable deal as we can for your children and those in school. We know it is tough and we know that this second time feels so much harder. Everyone has less enthusiasm and motivation and we should not underestimate the power the sunshine had in helping us through last time compared to the cold and dark days of now. It seems cruel then that the remote education this time has higher expectations.

This is because we were already trying to fill the gaps that the last lockdown created and the children cannot afford to 'stand still' in their learning this time. The government expect us to offer a full curriculum and ensure children's learning continues to move forwards. Every stage of education is important and each year group curriculum lays a solid foundation for the next year and ensures 'readiness' in a child to progress. We have deliberately chosen the curriculum content we are sending because we recognise its importance in securing those building blocks.

For that reason, it is vital that children engage with the offer. You may find that your child's teacher and then the senior leadership or pastoral team contact you about this if engagement is not sufficient to allow those things to happen. We want to work with you and recognise all the complexities of learning from home and barriers that many families will be facing. Please let us know if we can help in any further detail than the offer currently holds – we are here to support you in any way we can to get through this time together.

I trust that you are all safe and well and hope that we can all be together as one big school family again soon – we miss you all, and the interactions we usually have as a community, very much.

Take care,

Mrs Kathryn Thornburn

Principal

