

The Federation of Boldmere Schools

Cofield Road · Sutton Coldfield · B73 5SD

Our Vision: The Federation of Boldmere Schools empowers all children to embrace learning; achieve their personal best; and build their social, emotional and physical wellbeing.

4 January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

We certainly would have liked for our first communication of the New Year to have been one that does not mention Covid-19 and the continued challenges we face in schools. Unfortunately, this is not the case and we are again in the unenviable position of having to make difficult decisions.

You will be fully aware of the new variants of Covid-19 that are becoming more and more evident across the country. Huge concerns have been raised by Teaching and other School Staff Unions over what has been an incredibly stressful weekend, advising their members not to return to work for face to face teaching in school.

Further to our earlier correspondence, I am pleased to confirm that our schools will be open for all pupils who choose to attend. We sincerely hope that you appreciate the fact that at present, staff are disregarding their unions and putting aside their own fears and genuine anxieties of how safe schools are, so they are in school for your children. Once again, this is not a decision we have made lightly and our commitment to keeping our schools open is clear to see. However, should this change, we hope you will respect the decisions of the staff and school in the ever-changing circumstances that we are continuously faced with.

Challenging and difficult conversations have taken place this morning and once again to their absolute credit, our staff have agreed to be in school, but certainly not without their reservations. We simply cannot shy away from the fact that by opening schools and despite what the government says, pupils and staff are at risk of infection, even with the numerous risk management/assessment steps we have in place. Staff are concerned but are agreed for now that we need to do all we can at this present moment but, of course, this could change.

We hope that this is welcome news at a time of immense uncertainty. We are aware that a number of Birmingham schools will be closed to pupils except for children of critical workers and vulnerable children. Each school will manage this latest situation in their own way and in the context of their own issues. Once again, we are grateful to our staff for putting your children first at great sacrifice to themselves. We are also aware that you, yourselves, will have concerns about your child/ren attending school and you must make your own decisions about whether or not you feel it is safe to do so. For any parents/carers who choose not to send their child to school during this period of uncertainty, we certainly respect and indeed support your decision. We would like to make it clear that if you choose for your child not to attend school, there will be no action from school in relation to non-attendance.

Managing schools during the pandemic is challenging enough and we must insist that parents/carers adhere to the rules and guidelines of 'Tier 4'. We also insist that you follow all procedures that we have put in place at our schools as a means of trying to manage Covid-19, which is a relentless task.

Please remember the following:

- That we will do everything we can to main Covid awareness and safety at school but the biggest job is what you all do outside school – Stay at home, wear your face coverings, wash hands regularly, do not mix households.
- We have to do this together if we are to have any chance of success in minimising infection and transmission. We are relying on our families to help us keep Covid at bay, a real community effort to keep each other safe.
- Only one parent can drop or collect and must then go immediately to reduce the dangers of mixing households – we need to keep numbers low and contact minimal.

- Please make sure at morning drop off you maintain social distance from other families and keep a good distance from the main school gate until your child enters.
- Make sure your child has all of their equipment – staff will not accept coats, bags, kit, water bottles or any other items.
- The site will remain well ventilated so make sure your child has their school jumper and a coat.
- Continue to be spaced on entry to the playground for evening collection.
- Please be advised to wear face coverings and you will not be able to meet with staff on the playground.
- If your child has symptoms (regardless of how well you know your child or what you think their illness is) you must isolate them and book a Covid test. They must not come to school.
- If you have been in contact and are isolating, your child may come to school so long as you are not symptomatic – once you have symptoms yourself, your children become contacts and must then isolate.
- Parents should review their abilities to work from home (in line with Tier 4 Stay at Home Guidance and in case we have to close)
- In the event of a closure, we will be looking to have the minimum number of pupils and staff on site (or else we defeat the object of closure).

At the time of writing, our before and after school club (Busy Bodies) will continue as during the Autumn term, whilst we are operationally viable to provide this provision. This will be reviewed on a weekly basis and it is important to stress that children attending will be in ‘year group bubbles’ not ‘class bubbles’ as we simply do not have the staff capacity. So please bear this in mind when deciding to access this provision.

We are sure that some of you will still be anxious about the effects of Covid-19 across the country at this time. Over the last ten months, we have been accustomed to ever changing situations and this way of working is certainly not sustainable but we will do what we can, as and when we are able to.

We sadly cannot guarantee that arrangements in place for all pupils to return will remain our position. We will continue to monitor our own circumstances and listen to staff feedback and it is quite possible that regional or national lockdown measures will be put in place in the coming days/weeks.

At present, we hope to remain open and operational as we start this new term but this will very much depend on the day to day health and safety evaluation with the duty of care to staff being treated equally to that of our pupils. This will also depend on what further announcements are made by the government in relation to national school closure. If this is the case, our schools will remain closed to ALL pupils following any such announcement for one day only after the day this decision may be made, allowing us to plan for the safe return of children of critical key workers and vulnerable children only.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mr C Glasgow
Executive Head Teacher

Mr G Bloom
Chair of Governors

The Federation of Boldmere Schools:
Boldmere Infant and Nursery School and Boldmere Junior School
Executive Head: Mr Carl Glasgow
Telephone: 0121 464 2338/3656 Fax: 0121 464 4342/1344
Email: enquiry@boldmere-inf.bham.sch.uk / enquiry@bldmerej.bham.sch.uk