

Melbourne Infant School

Frequently Asked Questions

Covid-19 Pandemic January 2021

Dear Parents

First, let me thank you for your support and understanding as we have responded to the impact of the second period of school closure caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The purpose of this guidance is to help parents understand what is happening in school at the present time. We have put together some frequently asked questions which we hope will explain the decisions we are making.

Since lockdown on 5 January, the school has operated in accordance with the mandatory guidelines issued by the UK Government and those issued by the DFE and Derbyshire County Council.

Q What guidance has the school used for key worker children?

A. The UK Government issued guidance on 5 January for schools on the eligibility of vulnerable and key worker children for a school place. Initially this was for a full time place in school.

This guidance changed on Friday 8 January requesting that key worker parents should only send children to school if it is not possible to keep them at home:

Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school or college if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.

A new letter and request form for key worker places was sent out on Monday 11 January. In a change to the guidance from Monday 8 January, the school is now offering part time places to children of key workers.

Q. How has the school verified these requests?

A. All applications have been checked against the key worker criteria and proof from employers has been requested and received. Where required, phone calls have also been made

Q. How many children are in school??

A. This information cannot be disclosed as it could potentially identify the individuals involved, especially if combined with other data, and this would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act 2018. Therefore, this is exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on the grounds that it is personal information.

Q. Anecdotally I have heard from several people that the number of pupils still attending school in Melbourne is very high.

A Unfortunately, the school is unable to respond to this as it would not be possible to offer up a 'like for like' comparison as to what would constitute high attendance in the current circumstances.

Q. Anecdotal information indicates that some children are attending where:

- One parent is a key worker, the other parent doesn't work but they still send child
- Key worker parents are part time but send children full time.

Is this the case?

A. The school is unable to answer questions which are based on anecdotes, with no benchmark as to compare those numbers to and where disclosure may lead to a breach of personal data.

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You may be aware that the guidance for key workers changed on Friday 8 January and as a consequence, the school now offers part time places with key worker parents requested to keep children at home where possible.

Q. Some of the definitions of "key workers" seem particularly weak and not within the spirit of the measures.

A. The school can only work within the boundaries of current guidance offered by the DfE. Should the definitions of what constitutes a key worker change, the school will respond accordingly.

I appreciate this is a very difficult situation for the parents. The school is trying to provide a high level of remote education to support children and parents at this very challenging time.

Your sincerely

Charlotte Gibbs

Headteacher