

Head Teacher:  
M.Elliott (B.Ed. Hons, NPQH)  
Chantry Road  
Moseley  
Birmingham B13 8DW  
Telephone: 0121 464 5868  
Fax: 0121 464 5046  
Email: [enquiry@stionmon.bham.sch.uk](mailto:enquiry@stionmon.bham.sch.uk)  
Website: [www.stionmon.bham.sch.uk](http://www.stionmon.bham.sch.uk)  
Twitter: @SSJohnMonicas



04.01.21

### **School Closure: Start of Spring term 2021**

Dear Parents /Carers,

I hope this letter finds you and your families well.

I apologise that I am writing to you at such short notice, given that the start of the new school term is tomorrow, but unfortunately, I have had no alternative due to recent announcements by the government and teaching and support staff unions.

On Wednesday 30th December the government announced that primary schools in some Tier 4 areas would be instructed to undertake online learning with their children for the first two weeks of this term. These areas were identified within the DfE's (Department for Education) "Contingency Framework" and included all London boroughs and some surrounding counties but not schools in other Tier 4 areas, including schools which fall under Birmingham Local Authority.

On Friday the 1<sup>st</sup> January, the DfE updated their guidance, following health concerns raised by some local councils, to include all London boroughs. The latest version of the "Contingency Framework" can be viewed here:

[DfE Contingency Framework](#)

On Saturday the 2<sup>nd</sup> January a number of leadership, teacher and support staff unions shared their concerns with both the government and their members and questioned why primary schools in some Tier 4 areas were being instructed to undertake at least two weeks of remote learning and others were being instructed to start in person learning from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January. You can read their views and comments with these links:

[NAHT \(National Association of Head Teachers\)](#)

[NEU \(National Education Union\)](#)

[NASUWT \(National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers\)](#)

[UNISON \(Public Service Union\)](#)

The government recognise that:

*"Evidence shows the new strain of COVID-19 is increasing across the country. The majority of the cases identified in London, the South East and the East of England are of the new variant. Infection rates have increased faster than expected in these areas where the new*

strain has been circulating and stronger measures are required to get the virus under control.” (DfE Contingency Framework)

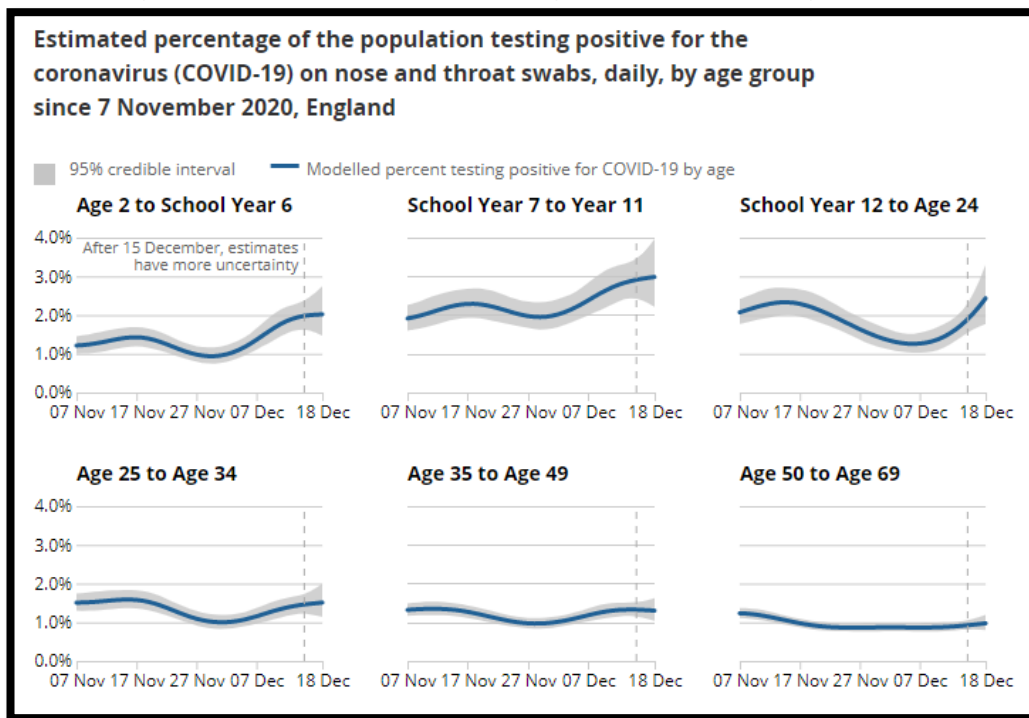
The minutes from a SAGE meeting on 22 December 2020 which informs the government’s decision making stated:

*“It is highly unlikely that measures with stringency and adherence in line with the measures in England in November (i.e. with schools open) would be sufficient to maintain R below 1 in the presence of the new variant. R would be lower with schools closed.”*

The minutes from this meeting can be viewed here:

[SAGE meeting 22.12.2020](#)

The Office for National Statistics shared data that shows that rates of Covid-19 positive cases were rising in primary and secondary aged children during December:



[ONS Covid-19 survey 24.12.2020](#)

Please also see attached the letter Councilor Ian Ward, Leader of Birmingham City Council, to the Secretary of State, Gavin Williamson MP regarding the rapid changes in the path of the epidemic and current rates in Birmingham, which are well over 300/100K.

As a result of the concerns and union advice given to members, our teachers and support staff have informed us that they will be following their union advice and not be available to teach whole class groups face-to-face for the next two weeks. They will be available to organise remote learning and teach a small number (i.e. Critical worker and vulnerable children). For this reason, school will be closed for the next two weeks to those other than Critical worker and vulnerable pupils.

Whilst we understand this is inconvenient and undesirable, the Governors and Head Teacher have a duty of care to provide a safe working environment for children and staff.

Online learning will begin for all pupils on Tuesday 5th January via Seesaw and you will receive more information about this via letter from Mr. Ullah.

We will open for the Critical worker and vulnerable pupils from tomorrow 5<sup>th</sup> Jan (usual staggered times) and will be following the original list of key worker children that was established back in March 2020. Please do not turn up to school with your child, if their name was not on this original list. If your circumstances have changed and you are now considered to be a critical worker, you must send proof of this ( e.g. letter from your employer) to [enquiry@stjonmon.bham.sch.uk](mailto:enquiry@stjonmon.bham.sch.uk).

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact the school office. We ask you to be patient and we will endeavor to get back to you as soon as we can.

This is obviously not the start that we would have wanted to this new year and again, I can only apologise for this sudden announcement. We will continue to keep you updated as new information comes in and if the situation changes.

Thank you for your continued support for our school.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Elliott', written in a cursive style.

Mrs. M. Elliott

Head Teacher