

Letter Regarding the Government Announcement

Dear Parents & Carers,

On Monday, we were excited to welcome our children into school after the festive period; the Government announcement on Monday night came as a shock to the staff. We were frustrated that the Government's decision was not made earlier and did not give us adequate time to prepare to welcome vulnerable and key worker children into school the following day. Parents and the local community may think that schools are contacted prior to a government announcement to allow the schools time to prepare. However, this is NOT the case. Schools find out about new restrictions at the same time as everyone else.

I thought you may have had a few concerns and questions about the current situation and thought it would be best to try and outline them below:

Why did the school need to close yesterday?

As we only found out that schools would need to close at 8pm yesterday, this did not give us adequate time to collect information from parents about critical worker status and assign pupils safely to new class bubbles. In the previous lockdown, the Prime Minister gave notice about the lockdown 2 working days prior, thus enabling school staff to collect the relevant information and assign new class bubbles safely.

Why did we initially only offer places to families with two key workers?

In the previous lockdown we reduced class group numbers to a maximum of 15 and we had less staff on site. Now that we have a robust risk assessment and a range of procedures in place to reduce the risk, we feel confident that we can have more children on site and so can offer places to families with either 1 or 2 critical workers. Also, the Government guidance is now clearer and specifies that children can attend if just one of the members of the family is a critical worker.

What will happen if my child is learning from home?

If your child is learning from home, they will need to access the remote learning sessions. Please look for your child's home learning book, within the book you will be able to see a range of on-line activities that the children can access, you will also find their login for 'teams'. Staff will be contacting you twice a week to support with home learning and can guide you through the remote learning systems. Staff will also offer a physical learning pack if you struggle to access technology. We will also send out a 'Remote Learning' letter that will give you guidance on the expectations per year group. If you have any problems please feel free to contact the school and a member of staff will be in contact.

Head of School: Mrs N. Whittaker

Tonge Moor Primary Academy, Brierwood, Bolton, BL2 2PF

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Why is the school Nursery still open?

The Prime Minister announced in his briefing that nurseries could remain open. This is optional. Our staff felt confident that they could provide an education to all pupils safely on site and this is why the school nursery is open fully.

I hope this letter gives you some understanding of the reasoning behind the decisions that we have made. I was truly upset that only some of our pupils would be able to access the school setting for the next 6 weeks. However, I understand that we must support our colleagues in the NHS. I am overwhelmed by all of the support from the staff, parents and pupils. We are honestly truly blessed to have such a fantastic school community. Thank you for being so patient with us and offering words of support. If you are working from home with your children, please stay safe and look after yourselves. Don't put too much pressure on yourselves to be amazing teachers- that's our job and we will always catch up on any lost learning when the pupils return. If your children will be attending school, stay safe whilst completing your critical worker role.

We look forward to welcoming you all back in 6 weeks' time,

Kind Regards,

Mrs N. Whittaker

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