

Monday, 4th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

URGENT MESSAGE- PARTIAL SCHOOL CLOSURE

As you are aware, we were extremely proud of our staff today, who all returned after the Christmas break ready for a new term of exciting teaching and learning. Ryders Hayes was considered a safe place to learn and to work, with only 3 isolated, positive cases in Autumn Term, none of which were subsequently transmitted to either pupils or staff in school, and a robust risk assessment which has been reviewed. Attendance was high for last term, well above national average, and the catch-up programme was going extremely well for pupils to get them back on track. We had just one family reporting positive tests for the children during the Christmas break, and another group of children self-isolating, having had a contact with a positive case.

However, following the Prime Minister's serious announcement this evening, and rising cases across the country due to the new variant, we are now directed to **partially close the school with effect from tonight, 4th January for on-site attendance**, except for critical workers' and vulnerable pupils, who are expected to attend daily, unless clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV). We expect these arrangements to be in place until at least February half-term. **It is crucial if you want us to admit your child to school in the morning, that you submit a critical worker form on ParentMail by 10pm this evening, if you haven't already done so. This form was sent to you earlier today at 9am. We will expect all children with special educational needs funding/EHCP to also attend school tomorrow – you do not need to complete any form for this, but will be contacted this evening by a senior leader.**

This means that we will be switching to remote learning for most children, quite a different experience from the first 'lockdown', which will be: a blend of live-streamed lessons through their Google account and recorded/modelled and independent tasks, (especially for our youngest children). You will receive a timetable for the week **by tomorrow lunchtime** and your child, from Reception to Year 6 will be expected to join the class each morning thereafter on Google Classroom from home, when a register will be taken (and again in the afternoon) for safeguarding purposes. **This will commence at 1pm tomorrow.** Should your child be ill and unable to engage online, then we would expect you to still call the school as you normally would on the first day of any sickness before 9:30am.

For children in Years 1-6, the streamed live lessons will take place throughout each morning, with an hour for lunch, and then a variety of live lessons and set tasks in the afternoon, with a timetable each week. Children remote learning will access most resources on-line and 'turn in' their work through Google Classroom for feedback. We will work with families to try to ensure that your child has access to a device as soon as possible.

For our Early Years pupils (Reception only initially), they will be expected to engage in a Google Classroom Check-in/Greeting session in the morning at the time they would usually start school, and then Storytime at 1pm, from lunchtime tomorrow. They will also have age-appropriate pre-recorded tasks to complete during the day and will receive feedback on these during the week.

Critical worker and vulnerable pupils still required to attend school

It is expected that all vulnerable children except CEV pupils, i.e.:

- those with special educational needs and disability funding/EHCPs (SEND) contacted by Mrs Deeley;
- and any children identified by the school as particularly benefitting from face-to-face learning, including time to start early years pupils. You will be contacted by Mrs Heaton and Mrs Day via email.

will be joined by pupils of critical workers **in their own year group from tomorrow, daily** in school. Your child's class teacher will be confirmed to you in due course, along with their email address as a point of contact.

In most cases, they will be:

- taught by their own class teacher and support staff (dependent upon numbers of pupils in school and any staff absence)
- expected to arrive and leave at the usual staggered start/finish time (with the exception of Year 4, who will not be required to use the *Walking 4s* during this period but arrive at 8:45am using the main side gate to KS2 playground and be dismissed from here at 3:25pm)
- in school uniform (apart from PE days)
- asked not to bring any books or stationery between home and school
- able to order a cold lunch from AIP as usual, or children can bring in their own sandwiches.

They will engage in learning in much smaller groups (approx 1/3 of the normal cohort size); socially distanced, usually seated at individual tables (apart from EYFS), with their own equipment and resources. There will be interaction in live lessons with those pupils in their class who are remote learning.

We plan to make Before and After School Club available to these groups of children, as long as demand dictates from 7:30-16:45. **This will be available tomorrow. Parents wishing to re-use the facility in the light of the partial closure should re-book tomorrow please for subsequent days.**

Please bear with us in the morning due to the lateness of the directive. Remote learning will commence from 1pm tomorrow, Tuesday 5th January.

We trust that this letter helps to reassure you that Ryders Hayes will continue to strive to provide the very best education for your children under these challenging circumstances, and to support you and your family. We have learnt a great deal from our previous experiences of remote learning and want to put this into practice with you, to help your child *to be the best they can be*, whether that is at home or at school to make *every day a learning day*.

Sally Miner and Jaz Paul