

11th January 2021

Dear Parents,

As you are aware, the school is currently closed to 'most pupils'. The government has set out guidance as to who qualifies as 'critical workers' and these families are permitted to send their children to school. Nearly all schools have found the number of children attending school has increased considerably since the first lockdown.

The Government guidance states:

*'Critical workers: Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID_19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined...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.**'*

With infection rates at an all time high, I would ask all parents to **carefully consider if your child needs to be in school at this time**. We fully appreciate that home schooling your child is very challenging particularly if you are balancing this with work.

Staff at St. Mary's are working onsite during the pandemic if they are able to. Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable are following guidance to stay away. All the staff are working extremely hard to provide onsite education whilst also planning and posting work and responding to work on the online platforms. It is difficult to convey to parents how much the workload has increased as a result of the lockdown, but please be assured the teachers are doing their absolute best to meet the needs of all pupils in their classes both onsite and offsite.

The school is currently taking the following action to support families with children at home:

1. Posting as much work as we can for pupils to complete.
2. Providing 'live' meetings where possible.
3. Offering pastoral support for children and families who are struggling.
4. Offering support with technology
5. Continuing to provide free school meals for those families eligible.
6. Supporting families in accessing support from external agencies.

We will constantly review our remote learning provision to do our absolute best with the resources we have available to us to prevent pupils from falling behind with their learning.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Woolley

Headteacher.

