



# Le Cateau

## Community Primary School

4<sup>th</sup> January 2021

### RE: CLOSURE OF FACE TO FACE TEACHING - SPRING TERM 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

Following on from the letter I shared with you yesterday and in light of a numerous discussions with the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors and LA representatives late into the evening yesterday, myself and the Governing Body have made the extremely difficult decision to **close the school for face to face teaching for at least the next two weeks with effect from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January for all pupils.**

As I stated yesterday, there has been a significant amount of discussions taking place amongst unions on a national level with regards to the pandemic, it's escalation and the potential threat to children and staff in schools. This is in response to the two Government announcements that have taken place during the Christmas break while school has not been open, and all agencies having to constantly adapt to escalations and changes caused by the pandemic.

Yesterday, I received notification from the vast majority of staff members stating they are exercising their right not to teach full classes as from tomorrow. The staff have not made this decision lightly and have said that they want the children back in school as soon as possible but feel that at the present time this is their only option due to significant health and safety concerns.

As the Headteacher I have legal duties to protect the health, safety and welfare of staff and pupils. Those duties arise under the following legislation: -

- Sections 2 and 3 of the Health & Safety Act 1974
- Regulations 3 and 8 of the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Regulation 4 of the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
- Regulation 4 of the Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Regulation 7 of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002

The most recent advice from SAGE is that schools should not open on January 1<sup>st</sup> other than for children of critical workers and vulnerable children. This is because the scientific advice is that it is not safe for schools to open. There are new variants of Covid-19 that are highly infectious and infection rates have increased significantly within the school locality since schools closed. The staff were clear that they fully appreciate the measures that have been in place since September to allow the school to open safely and fully support them however, according to SAGE, those measures may no longer be sufficient.

Based on the above information, myself and the Governing Body have concluded that it is not safe for a return to teaching full classes at Le Cateau Community Primary School. I have completed a full review of the school risk assessment and have reached the difficult decision that we are unable to operate in a safe manner due to significant staffing shortages. We are able to provide reduced face to face teaching for a small number of pupils in every year group depending on a set criteria.

Following discussions with the Chair (Mrs Julie D'Arcy) and the Vice Chair (Mrs Wendy Shepherd) of the school's Governing body and the school's Senior Leadership Team, we have had to take some quick and decisive action. The local authority are also aware of the steps we are taking.

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### **What are the decisions?**

Le Cateau Community Primary School will not be open to any pupils on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January as this is an INSET day. From Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the **only pupils able to attend the setting** are those pupils with EHCPs, those deemed 'vulnerable' or have both parents that are deemed critical workers in relation to the Covid-19 response. These measures are the same as previous and we are able to allocate a small number of these places in each year group across the school.

Staff will use today's INSET to identify critical worker and vulnerable children across the school and to communicate with the parents of those children that a place has been allocated full time at school as from 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021. We are also asking parents who feel they fall into this category to request a place.

### **Is my child entitled to a place in school over the next two week period?**

The criteria for 'Critical Workers and vulnerable children' is outlined below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

It is essential that this guidance is read before you request a place. If you believe that your child/ren fit the criteria then you will need to notify the admin team via email as soon as possible. Your email should be sent to: [covid@le-cateau.n-yorks.sch.uk](mailto:covid@le-cateau.n-yorks.sch.uk) with the words **CRITICAL WORKER STATUS** in the subject area.

As a school, we will make the final decision over whether a child is allocated a place. Please do not telephone the school as this may not be picked up in time for Tuesday. We will contact you via email to confirm the outcome of your request.

Children who are not allocated a place at school under the above criteria will **not be allowed to attend school** and will be supported via **remote learning** from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 for an initial two week period. The platform for this remote learning is through Seesaw and each year group will be providing an overview as to what the expectations are later today. We have reviewed the measures from the last lockdown period and know that the improved measures are more meaningful to the pupils. The attached overview indicates what the expectations are for remote learning and staff will increase their engagement with yourself as parents and with your child.

### **Access to technology?**

As part of the overview, there is a link to a short survey where we can identify additional technology to assist with pupils undertaking remote learning. These resources of laptops and iPads are limited and priority will be given to those with the highest need. If you would like your child to be considered for the 'loan' of a piece of technology then the following link needs to be completed:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HGJ6RRW>

### **If I am allocated a place, can I access Breakfast Club and After School?**

For those allocated a place under the 'vulnerable' or critical worker criteria, we are able to offer the facility of Breakfast Club under the usual arrangements at the normal charge. This will need to be booked accordingly and in advance of accessing the service. ***Please do not complete a booking unless you have had confirmation of an allocated place.***

I am also in discussions with PT After School Care regarding what provision they will provide. Please check with them directly later today to discuss what the arrangements are.

### **What about Free School Meals?**

If you are in receipt of the grant aided free school meal system then we will be providing a 'delivery service' for those pupils not allocated a place in school. A member of the admin team will contact you directly regarding this later today and inform you as to what the options are.

### **And finally...**

I know this letter will cause anxieties, strains and potential financial losses to families and I cannot apologise enough for this and for the late notice. It is with a very heavy heart that I am left with no alternative at the present time than to carry out the above actions however, the safety of everyone in school is the number one priority. As

throughout the pandemic, I will keep you continually informed as and when I know more and I will be liaising with the local authority to find a way forward.

I understand that you may have lots of questions - please direct them to the school as opposed to through other media at the present time. Thank you for your support at this very difficult time and I hope we can return to normal arrangements as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ian Mottram". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Mr Ian Mottram  
Headteacher