

4<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear parents/ carers,

I hope you are well and have enjoyed the Christmas break. The New Year has brought a new set of challenges for schools and families which will unfortunately impact on our provision. Northumberland has recently been placed into Tier 4 with stricter restrictions regarding how we go about our everyday lives.

As a school leader it has been a challenging time but our main priority is to support our pupils and their families.

There were high levels of uncertainty around the return of pupils to school this week and we are currently waiting for the Government, Local Authority and Unions to clarify their position on the situation for schools such as ours.

You may be aware that there are different expectations in terms of provision for Secondary and Primary aged pupils, pupils with EHCP's and those families who have support for external professionals such as children's social care. We are therefore working closely with unions and our governors to determine what we can offer individual students, taking into account risk assessments, staffing and the logistics of our building. There are a number of variables to consider, but please feel confident that we are making decisions based on the best interests of our pupils and staff.

We have made the decision to remain open to Primary aged pupils in line with Government expectations. Pupils in years 2-6 inclusively will therefore return to school on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January.

The Government has brought in a rapid testing scheme for secondary aged pupils and has advised that these pupils receive remote education until the 18<sup>th</sup> January. This provides school with sufficient time to plan, organise and train staff on the testing procedures. We have therefore decided that pupils in years 7, 8 and 9 will be taught using our remote learning plan (shared with you in October). Teaching staff will contact all parents/ carers individually to explain how this will work in practice.

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasise that staff are working tirelessly to ensure that your child receives appropriate educational provision and we fully appreciate that these measures may not be what you hoped for. As Head of School I have a duty to protect both staff and pupils and therefore have taken into consideration a number of factors before implementing these actions.

I will be reviewing the situation daily and will keep you informed of any amendments. Please check out Facebook and website pages for updates. Thank you for your ongoing support in these difficult times.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me on 01670514963.

Kind regards,

Emma Blackburn

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E Blackburn'.

Head of School