

11<sup>th</sup> January 2021

(By email)

Dear Parents and Carers,

I know it is only a week since I last wrote, but, given how rapidly government guidance is changing, I thought it important to keep you fully informed. Indeed, we find ourselves entering only the second week and national advice has changed. At 5:30pm on Friday evening the Department of Education updated their guidance for access to schools for critical workers and vulnerable children. I would like to bring to your attention the changed emphasis for providing on site education at schools. The government guidance now states:

**‘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’.**

WeST schools continue to strengthen and develop their remote learning offer and this provision will continue to provide learning for those children who are at home. We are also currently still able to provide ‘On-site Provision’, for vulnerable children or those children whose parents are critical workers. However during this lockdown we have seen significantly more children continuing to attend our schools than at the time of the previous lockdown, and numbers are rising. The common goal, however, is to remain safe, reduce the spread of infection and break the chain of transmission.

Our current position of the Westcountry Schools Trust remains as follows:

Applications/requests from parents who are critical workers will be accepted **where the provision of partial or full on-site education is essential and as a last resort** in order for them to perform their critical worker role. Applications/requests will be accepted where one or both parents are critical workers.

However if the number of critical worker children needing to be in school continues to rise, we **may** need to consider a limit to the numbers of children in school on a priority basis as below:

1. Vulnerable pupils where both parents are critical workers or working in the NHS.
2. Pupils of staff vital to the provision of the on-site education offer.
3. Pupils where one parent is a critical worker and there is no alternative safe option.

**Please, if you are at home and NOT working** (different if you are a critical worker and working from home or if your child is eligible to attend for other reasons) **keep your child at home to learn remotely.** The more bodies in school, the greater the risk for everyone.


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**In the event that we have to isolate year groups, including staff members, no On-site Provision in school can be offered.** I would urge critical worker parents to ensure you have a Plan B to provide alternative childcare arrangements should this become necessary.

Finally, please can I reiterate the importance that if a member of your household tests positive or family members are waiting for test results that children DO NOT come to school as this increases the risk of every member of our school community.

I wish to convey my appreciation and thanks for your ongoing understanding and support at this critical time.

Yours sincerely,



Rob Haring  
CEO Westcountry Schools Trust