



# ST RAPHAEL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

Dear Parents & Carers,

## **RE: CRITICAL WORKER AND VULNERABLE PLACES AT SCHOOL**

The School received a high number of applications for critical worker places initially when the announcement of school closures came on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021. We have also had a high number of requests since this period. These have all been processed in line with the Government guidelines and with consideration to the safety of both the children and staff.

There are several points that I wish to clarify about the allocation of places in School.

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**Firstly**, all decisions regarding places have been made by a panel of the schools SLT who have considered each application using the criteria published by Government and the evidence provided by parents;

### **'Children of critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools'**

and the further guidance on restricting attendance during the national lockdown;

### **'Restricting attendance during the national lockdown: schools'**

In restricting attendance, the guidance to schools states the following:

*'limiting attendance is about supporting the reduction of the overall number of social contacts in our communities. We have resisted restrictions on attendance at schools since the first lockdown but, in the face of the rapidly rising numbers of cases across the country and intense pressure on the NHS, we now need to use every lever at our disposal to reduce all our social contacts wherever possible.'*

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**Secondly**, following the publication of *'Restricting attendance during the national lockdown: schools'* we sent a request to parents asking, in line with the guidance, that if they were able to keep their child at home they did so. We appreciate that not all critical workers are able to do this as they must leave the house to work but a number of our critical worker parents were able to do this to reduce the number of children in school overall.

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**We ask again, that in line in line the latest advice given to schools from the Government ALL critical worker parents consider if they can keep their child/children at home on any days.**

**Additionally, we are asking that any parents who are able to work from home on any days or do not work full time keep their children at home with them.**

We know how hard it is to work from home while your children are there, however, as we know these are unprecedented times. If you can reduce your child's attendance, please email [admin@st-raphaels.tameside.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-raphaels.tameside.sch.uk) stating 'Key Worker Attendance' as the subject.

The current numbers in school are 35-40% of the total children which is very high compared to other schools in Tameside and well above the National average of 20%. We now need to try to reduce these numbers where possible and your help will be greatly appreciated.

**If numbers do not reduce then the Governing Board have requested that all critical workers will need to re-apply for places and provide detailed evidence of job roles and days worked.**

This does not include parents of Nursery children; Government guidance has been very clear that school based nurseries should be open to all pupils.

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**Thirdly**, we are unable to discuss the allocation of critical worker places with any other parent and would appreciate your support in this matter. Every case has been considered using the above criteria and no other factors.

School attendance and critical worker places are discussed at the Governing Board's fortnightly Covid Committee meeting. Further to the most recent meeting they have asked us to send this communication out to all parents to seek to further reduce school attendance.

Additionally, from this point forward any further communication in relation to critical worker places will be referred to the Covid Committee and new requests will be refused unless there are exceptional circumstances.

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**Fourthly**, the National Guidance is clear, please make sure you are aware of your responsibilities as parents and carers, particularly with regards to the current lockdown rules and what you should do if you suspect someone in your household has symptoms of Covid-19.

If a member of your household has Covid-19 symptoms and/or has gone for a Covid-19 test, the whole household must stay at home until the result is confirmed. If the result is positive the [Stay at Home Guidance](#) must be followed.

Please visit the [Government Portal](#) and the [NHS Website](#) for more detailed information.

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**Finally**, we know that this is a difficult time for everyone. Our main priority is the health and safety of all our school community - children, parents and staff and all decisions are made with this aim taking a safe and sensible approach.

We all look forward to a time when all the children can return to school. Until that time thank you for your continued support and stay safe,



**Mrs Lynn Lakner, Headteacher**

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