

Dear Parents and Carers,

January 5th 2021

Re National Lockdown January 2021

I am writing further to the Prime Minister's announcement on 4 January in which he explained that a new national lockdown will come into effect at 00.01 on Wednesday 6 January.

As part of this lockdown, schools will be open only to vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. All other children will learn remotely until February half term.

The Prime Minister confirmed that exams in the summer can no longer go ahead given the disruption pupils have faced this year. However, Vocational exams in the January session will go ahead.

I have enclosed at the end of this letter an excerpt from the Department for Education briefing sent to me late last evening.

I realise that this will come as disappointing news and as soon as we have more information, we will share it with you. We will do all we can to support you with the remote learning process.

I submitted a request to the DfE on yesterday for the laptops the Government promised to provide Wey Valley to support home learning for those families struggling to provide the necessary equipment. I do not know if or when we will get these. In the meantime if your son or daughter does not have any access to TEAMS via a tablet, laptop or computer please contact parkesl@weyvalley-academy.co.uk to discuss this and we will endeavour to assist in some way.

In the meantime, please continue as per the arrangements we have in place for your child tomorrow and for this term – they will either be learning on site, or working remotely at home, although the timeframes have clearly changed following last night's announcement.

Yours faithfully



Rob Russell

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National lockdown to come into force on Wednesday 6 January

The Prime Minister has today announced that a [new national lockdown](#) will come into force at 00:01 on Wednesday 6 January.

During the period of national lockdown, schools will remain open to vulnerable children and young people and the children of [critical workers](#) only. Public vocational exams and assessments scheduled to take place in January will go ahead as planned. All other children and students will learn remotely until February half term.

In these circumstances, we do not think it is possible for exams to go ahead fairly this summer. The Secretary of State for Education will be asking Ofqual to consult rapidly on an approach for alternative arrangements that will allow students to progress fairly.

We know that receiving face-to-face education is best for children's mental health and for their educational achievement. We will be reviewing the restrictions on schools, colleges and universities and will ensure that children and young people return to face-to-face education as soon as the pressures are easing on the NHS.

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This decision does not suggest that schools and colleges are no longer safe places for young people. Instead, limiting attendance is about reducing the number of contacts that all of us have with people in other households.

We have resisted closing schools until now, 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 contacts outside households wherever possible.

For vulnerable children and the children of critical workers, who can still attend school or college, as they did in March to May, and their teachers, the system of protective measures means that any risks are well managed and controlled.

We are responding to the intense pressure on the NHS, but that pressure is not driven by children. We are not seeing significant pressure from coronavirus (COVID-19) in paediatrics across the UK. The new variant appears to affect all ages but we have not seen any changes in the severity among any age groups, including children and young people.

The overwhelming majority of children and young people have no symptoms or very mild illness only. As cases in the community rise there will be a small increase in the number of children we see with coronavirus (COVID-19) who only rarely require admission to hospital.

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