

January 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

## Re: Attendance at school during the lockdown

I realise that you are currently receiving a lot of information from school. Unfortunately, guidance from the Department for Education for the operation of schools during lockdown seems to be changed and updated frequently and I do think it is important that this information is passed on to parents.

Schools are open for children from key worker families and vulnerable children, however, the latest updates and stories in the news have been around the significant increase in demand for school places when compared to school closures last March. The attendance level here at Sandford St Martin's is currently around 20%, which sees our in-school attendance level tripled compared to the lockdown in March and this does have an impact on the staffing levels required (and therefore their ability to work from home and support remote learning). We have over 110 children registered and numbers rise by the day (30% of the school). The DfE updated its guidance around school attendance on Friday 8th January and I have copied the link and associated text below for your information.

It is clear that the overall aim of the current lockdown and school closures is to reduce the number of contacts and spread of the virus within the community. The DfE have recently stated:

*Schools should speak to parents and carers to identify who needs to go to school. If it proves necessary, schools can ask for simple evidence that the parent in question is a critical worker, such as their work ID badge or pay slip. **Parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can.***

We have already identified families that will need support during this time have outlined the services that we will be able to provide at school. However, in order to ensure that the children and staff at school are as safe as possible and can operate in reasonably sized groups we will need to monitor the demand for key worker provision at school. I would like all parents think carefully about the DfE comment above and the published guidance when considering whether a place at school is necessary.

DfE links:

## **Guidance on restricting attendance at school during the national lockdown**

Yesterday we published [guidance for schools in England](#) on restricting attendance at school during the national lockdown.

Primary, secondary, alternative provision and special schools will remain open to vulnerable children and young people and the children of [critical workers](#) only (recognising that the characteristics of the cohorts in special schools and alternative provision will mean these settings can continue to offer face-to-face provision for all pupils, where appropriate). All other pupils should not attend and should learn remotely until February half-term. Pupils who are self-isolating should not attend school. Clinically extremely vulnerable pupils are also advised not to attend school  
Thank you for your co-operation at this difficult time for frontline services.

With my best wishes,

Mr Beveridge

Paul Beveridge  
*Headteacher*

**Sandford St Martin's CE VA Primary School**  
"Roots to grow... wings to soar"

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