



Rigby Lane, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 2EP

Tel: 01527 875475 Fax: 01527 870211

Headteacher: Mrs T Smith

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Thursday 14th January 2021

Dear Families,

I hope that you are all well.

I am writing to you to express my concerns around the significant rise in rates of COVID cases within both Bromsgrove, our local towns and also Worcestershire as a whole.

As you know I am always very open and honest with you and I hope that you appreciate me writing this letter to you is not easy and is out of a genuine concern and level of worry that I now have.

Since March 2020, we have been committed to offering our pupils, and you as families, the consistency of everyday schooling as much as we felt was safe for all.

This 'National Lockdown' is slightly different in that as Special Schools, we have been deemed safe to be open to all...as our pupils have EHCPs. Whilst this is amazing in theory; we love our pupils and want them to have as much consistency as possible, it is not safe to have the amount of people we currently have in the building together, in a town where rates have increased significantly in the past 7 days, in a county where the numbers have risen dramatically also.

Our policies, procedures, risk assessments, measures, bubbles and testing regime are all as safe as is practicably possible and will continue to be so providing everyone adheres to all the guidance. With the rates rising around us though, the data I have received this morning has brought the reality of this latest wave to the doorstep and I am concerned for the health of both our pupils and staff in the building.

Unlike some of our mainstream colleagues, we are unable to offer staff the ability to work a week from home on online learning, and a week face-to-face teaching due to the needs of our pupils. All of my staff are in school covering their contracted hours. Due to this, their own families are in other settings in key worker places thus increasing their health risks even further. We are being tested weekly to indicate if anyone may have this virus. We cannot though, stop anyone bringing in the virus, unknowingly, and infecting a number of our staff, pupils and then yourselves as families and contacts.

We currently have 77 staff in the building and 105 pupils. A total of 182 people. Although we are in bubbles, that's a lot of people to have in one place. Particularly as the guidance states we can only meet one other person out of our household for a walk!

I am coming to you as our families as I need us to work together in the best interests of our staff, pupils and yourselves.



“Valuing every achievement”



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I am asking you to consider whether at this time, and with rates increasing, if your child can be better kept safe at home in their family bubble rather than coming into school. We have the offer of online learning and would be in a better position for a longer period of time if we can keep staff and pupils safe and well.

To keep school open to all is the ideal, but today I am genuinely concerned that this will not be the case for much longer and we are going to start to see both pupils and staff becoming ill from this virus. This in turn then impacts the families of my staff and also yourselves. I am not saying your child cannot come to school I am asking whether there can be consideration given as to whether they need to come to school. If you are a key worker, and work part time, is your child better kept safely at home with you when you are not working? If you have other children at home, is it better that your child is safe at home with them also? If you do not work, is your child better and safer with you in your home? If there are any ways in which we can decrease the numbers in school and give staff and pupils more of a chance to keep safe, then I would very much appreciate this opportunity.

Please do not think you are about to lose a school place. Please talk this through in families and households this evening and consider the safest option for your child. I can only share with you my concerns for everyone involved and hope that the decision you come to is the safest option for everyone. This is an ever changing picture and I think the next 4 weeks are going to be very difficult, so we need to do as much as we can now, in order to resume some sense of normality as quickly and as safely as we can.

Any queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch by calling the school office on 01527 875 475 or email via covid@rigbyhall.worcs.sch.uk please do not contact my work mobile as I may be unable to field all these messages. We will send out a survey to capture your feelings around this and as ever, thank you greatly for all your support and understanding at this really difficult time for everyone.

Keep safe and keep well

Tracey



“Valuing every achievement”