

Executive Member for Learning and Skills
Director of Children and Families

7 January 2021

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s)

As you know, the country has entered a third lockdown and schools have closed for everyone except the children of key workers and vulnerable children. The purpose of the lockdown is to reduce contact and therefore reduce the infection rate of Covid-19. Our message to you is clear: the best action for you to take for your child, yourself and the whole community is to keep your child at home if it is safe to do so.

We are at a critical situation in Leeds. The infection rate has increased again to 316 per 100,000 an increase of 64% on last week, and further increases are likely as the effect of the Christmas relaxations feeds through.

We recognise that this will cause considerable disruption to your personal and working lives. Like you, we wish our children could be in school for the sake of their education and well-being.

For some of you, we understand that your work is of critical importance that your child absolutely has to be in school. However, if you qualify as a key worker, but can manage to have your children at home, please do this, and let your school know.

We know that many parents in Leeds have requested places in school and that your school may have turned down your request for critical worker provision. This is because in order to reduce potential transmission of Covid-19 and to ensure staff have the capacity to support the home learning of all others pupils, many schools have had to take the difficult decision to prioritise which children they are able to have in, by offering priority to those who cannot be safely kept at home at this time. Some schools base this on whether there is another adult available who can ensure the child is safe, or whether the critical worker has to leave the home to carry out their duties. Each school has different circumstances they are managing meaning that you may find your request is dealt with differently at your school to how a colleague's request is dealt with at their school.

We are expecting that the government will provide some further guidelines to schools very soon on how to decide which children of key workers can have a place. We would ask you to co-operate with your child's school and try to manage the difficult choices his or her head teacher has had to take.

Thank you for your understanding in what we recognise is a very difficult situation for everyone. We really do appreciate the pressure this situation places on all of us but we are acting in the midst of a pandemic. We hope the progress with vaccinations means we can see a brighter future later in the year and so there is hopefully and end in sight.

Our best wishes to you all please stay safe.

Yours faithfully



Councillor Jonathan Pryor
Executive Member for Learning and Skills



Saleem Tariq, OBE
Director, Children and Families