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**Chief Executive Officer:** Mrs L Whitehouse

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## **National Lockdown – Warwickshire Update**

Dear Parents/ Carers,

In light of a changing national picture, I wanted to write again to you to thank you for your continued support and provide further information on the position in Inspire Education Trust primaries.

The new variant of coronavirus is now said to be responsible for over two thirds of new infections in the West Midlands. Analysis via Public Health England shows that 70% of new infections in the city are the new variant, which the Government has said is far more transmissible than the original strain. This is contributing to North Warwickshire's increased rate of 369 people with the virus for every 100,000 of the population, which is one of the highest numbers since mass testing started.

This week we are continuing to ask that our families to take notice of the rapid rise in new variant infections and take action to help slow the spread. This is because as a town we want to ensure we can reduce transmission, avoid putting significant strain on our hospitals, and save lives.

In order to support this position, we are asking you to please keep your children at home where you are able to do so during this lockdown. Last week we have had over 8 times the number of children and young people in our schools when compared with the first lockdown (April 2020). Although, this is a great reflection of your confidence in how our schools have safely managed the virus since reopening, we are concerned that such high numbers attending schools during a national lockdown will not support reductions in the infection rate.

We recognise that it is essential that some children of critical key workers require a school place but are also pleased that the national guidance was updated to recognise that even where you meet critical key worker criteria you **should still keep children at home** if you are able to. Therefore, as a Trust, we are supporting our primary schools by recommending some local criteria they can apply to the key worker guidance, where they are struggling to accommodate the requests for places safely. As previously stated, for critical key worker pupils, we have suggested that schools prioritise places in the following order:

1. Vulnerable children.
2. Children where **both** parents are key workers or children with single parents who are key workers. NHS and education key workers to take priority if needed.
3. Children where only one of two parents is a key worker. NHS and education key workers to take priority if needed.

Thank you again for your continued support at this difficult time.



Rob Darling  
**Head of Education, Primary**