



Monday 11th January 2021

Update for Parents/Carers: children attending school.

Dear Parents/Carers,

I must start by saying thank you for the many kind messages of support our staff have received from parents/carers over the last difficult week. I know how much these have been appreciated by those on the front line in school and it is wonderful to read them.

As always, all Brooke Weston Trust Principals and staff are doing everything they can to make their schools as safe as possible and to mitigate the risk of transmitting the CoVID-19 infection. And because we are so focussed on this, I am writing to ask for your help in the challenging weeks ahead for us as schools as well as for your individual families.

I am sure you will understand that our schools' ability to operate is dependent on both having sufficient appropriate staff available to support all children on site and ensuring we can manage a quality remote learning offer for all children at home. You may have seen in the news that many schools across the country are struggling to do this because they are faced with a high volume of children attending despite the request from the government for everyone to stay at home if they possibly can. The consequence for schools is that they risk being overwhelmed as well as not achieving the government's objective of reducing levels of virus transmission in wider society.

I am writing to ask you directly to only send your children into school if it is absolutely necessary in line with the latest government guidance which can be found here [guidance for parents and carers](#). This guidance now states: *"Your child's school or college will speak to you to identify whether your child needs to attend. **You should keep your child at home if you can.** They may ask to see simple evidence to check whether you are a critical worker such as your work ID badge or a pay slip."* The [guidance on critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings](#) has also been updated to clarify that parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can.

All Brooke Weston Trust Principals will take whatever steps are required to keep their schools open as safely as possible. We always base our decisions on our robust risk assessment process, but to do this where schools are experiencing rising demand for on-site places may necessitate us asking you for further information about your work. So, to those parents whose children are already attending, or those who are planning to send their children to school this week, please do not be offended if your school asks you to provide evidence of your critical worker status and for details of your own working week (which days, etc). This information will be very helpful in planning provision as effectively as possible.

Thank you very much for your understanding and cooperation. We are not quite at tipping point yet and with your help we can avoid it. To repeat, we will always want to cater for critical worker children who absolutely cannot stay at home and we embrace our role in supporting the NHS. However, should any school find itself unable to meet demand for on-site places without compromising its risk mitigation arrangements, our Principals will implement contingency plans in line with the current guidance to schools and other relevant legislation for employers. I believe further steps like this can be avoided if we all play our part.

Best wishes and please stay safe.

Dr Andrew Campbell
Chief Executive
Brooke Weston Trust