

29th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to you again today with updates and to share new information.

Firstly, it is important to note that we continue to operate with significantly reduced numbers of staff due to the pandemic.

We are currently catering for 123 pupils throughout the week with most pupils attending on a part-time basis. This means that 35% of our pupil population are attending school while other pupils are offered remote learning opportunities. You will note that the percentage of pupils attending is the same as when I last wrote to you on 14th January. Due to reduced staffing and restrictions related to COVID secure practices, we are unable to increase the number of pupils attending school at this time.

I have been asked by parents:

- *“When will Meadowfield completely reopen?”*
- *“When will you be able to have more children in school?”*

Unfortunately, I am not able to answer these questions. When more staff are able to return to work, then we will be in a position to allow more children into school, our current focus continues to be our most vulnerable children and children of key workers. I simply cannot predict when we can increase the numbers of pupils in school yet I can reassure you that our Human Resources department is working closely with staff and that we review our situation on a daily basis with the aim of having as many pupils in school as possible. We understand that having pupils in school is vitally important, particularly pupils with EHCPs, yet the safety of everyone in the school community must always come first.

Please be mindful that government guidance states that children with at least one parent or carer who is a **key worker** can go to school if required. Parents and carers who are key workers should keep their children at home if they can.

We are working hard to ensure that **remote learning** is accessible for all pupils. We are continually looking at ways in which we can improve remote learning and have recently introduced Myon (an online reading programme) and Microsoft Teams. Please feel free to get in touch should you have any ideas on how we can improve remote learning and keep a look out for a survey asking for your views; sent yesterday via Parentmail. We are also eager to continue to help families with laptops and internet connection where needed so once again, please get in touch and we'll be happy to help.

Sadly, a time frame for special school staff to receive **vaccines** has not yet been developed. Kent County Council is working closely with Clinical Commissioning Groups and MPs in an effort to lobby for school staff to be given access to the vaccination programme. I will share further information as I receive it but at this stage I can tell you that **staff are being regularly tested** in school which is giving many staff reassurances about working in school.

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The DfE confirmed that schools will close as usual over **February half-term** (15th – 19th February) and are not expected to remain open to vulnerable children and the children of critical workers during that week.

Please note that if you are entitled to Free School Meal vouchers, these will not be provided by the school during the half term break but families will receive support via the Covid Winter Grant Scheme run by Local Authority. At the current time we have not been advised how this will operate but once we have received guidance on the system we will share this information with parents/carers.

I would encourage everyone to log onto their Parentmail account and check that the email/mobile details held in the account are correct. Unfortunately, the Parentmail accounts are personal and protected by passwords set up by parents/cares at the time of registration and the school does not have the ability to log onto a parents/carers account and amend email/mobile information due to data confidentiality. Therefore, if you do not amend your information with your latest email/mobile you may miss out on vital information.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school office tel.01795 477788 or email office@meadowfield.kent.sch.uk

Yours faithfully

Jill Palmer
Principal