



West Leigh Junior School

Part of the Portico Academy Trust

Executive Headteacher - Mrs C. Woolf

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PORTICO
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opening doors, unlocking potential

CEO – Mrs C. Woolf

31st December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

RETURN TO SCHOOL JANUARY 2021

First of all, we hope you and your families have had a restful and enjoyable break so far and that your Christmasses were as good as could have been expected in the current unusual circumstances.

Following the Government's announcement yesterday to defer face-to-face education in primary schools in Southend due to the extremely high prevalence of coronavirus in the area, we are writing to you to lay out our plans for when the children were due to return to school on **Tuesday 5th January** and the following days until the contingency framework is reviewed.

We have been directed by the DfE that we should only allow children of critical workers and those defined as vulnerable to attend school and that we should provide remote education for all other pupils. The teaching staff have been working hard to produce remote learning lessons and these are all set to go 'live' on Tuesday 5th January via our online learning platform, *Showbie*, with which all the children are familiar as they have been using it for some time in school and were given training at the end of last term in preparation for circumstances just as we find ourselves in at the moment. Of course, the children in 4R and 6W already have experience of this remote learning as we had to close their bubbles last term. All the guidance you require to access the online learning is on our website via the 'blended learning' tab - <https://www.westleighjunior.co.uk/blendedlearning>.

To minimise risk and restrict community transmission of the virus, we are having to insist that only, if you meet the criteria of both parents/carers identifying as critical workers, will your child be able to attend face-to-face lessons in school. Obviously, for single parent families it would be just the one parent/carer. The government's list of critical workers can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

If you feel that you meet the criteria above, there is a form attached to this letter for you to complete. Could you please return it to office@westleigh-jun.southend.sch.uk by noon on **Sunday 3rd January** at the latest. This will then give us time to make arrangements for those children who will be in school. Any child attending will follow the same curriculum, learning and lessons as those at home. Apologies for such short notice and requesting such a quick turnaround but we need to have that information as soon as possible to assist in our planning. The children attending school will be expected to be in school uniform. We will contact those parents who meet the criteria on **Monday 4th January** and give them further details. These arrangements will begin on **Tuesday 5th January**. We will not be running Breakfast Club during this period. School lunches will be available with choices from the usual menu, chosen daily.

If you feel that your child may be considered as vulnerable please contact us at the above email address or, if you prefer to call, telephone the school on 01702 478593 and ask to speak to either one of us on **Monday 4th January**. The government criteria for vulnerable children can be found here:

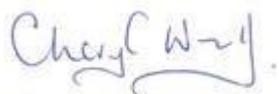
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

At this time, we would encourage you to follow advice from Public Health England and arrange a COVID-19 test from a local test centre before the start of term in preparation for a full school reopening. This is irrelevant of whether you or your child has symptoms. We would encourage you to take the test with your child 3 to 4 days before the return to school which might be **Monday** 18th January. We await Government guidance. This testing is not a foolproof method, but will reduce the number of asymptomatic positive cases that are within the community and therefore reduce the risk of transmission occurring in school.

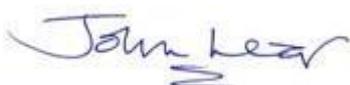
We recognise that this change of provision may bring challenges, but during these unprecedented times, we are adapting to the situation to ensure your children, our staff and community remain as safe as possible. Thank you, as always for your continued support and understanding as we make some very difficult decisions in very difficult circumstances. The messages of support that you send us are very much appreciated.

May we take this opportunity to wish you a Happy New Year as you (hopefully) spend it at home with your loved ones, if that is possible. Let's hope 2021 brings us a better year.

Yours sincerely



Executive Headteacher



Head of School