

29th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Prime Minister's statement on the national lockdown position

On Wednesday, the Prime Minister announced that it will not be possible to resume face-to-face learning immediately after the February half-term and instead hopes it will be safe to commence the re-opening of schools and colleges from Monday 8 March. This is in response to the national public health data and pressure on NHS capacity.

If the Government achieves its target of vaccinating everyone in the four most vulnerable groups with their first dose by 15 February then those groups will have developed immunity from the virus around three weeks later, that is by 8 March. It is for this reason that they hope it will therefore be safe to commence the reopening of schools from Monday 8 March.

Education settings, as well as students, parents and carers will be given at least two weeks' notice to prepare for a return to face-to-face education.

Schools and colleges will remain open to vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers after February half-term, as they are now. All other pupils will continue to receive high quality remote education at home. This is in line with the wider national lockdown measures to help minimise the spread of the virus and respond quickly to the new variant.

The government will also continue to provide support for pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals through the national voucher scheme to those learning at home during term time next half-term. Support will also be available during the half-term holiday for vulnerable families through the Covid Winter Grant Scheme. Education attendance restrictions are to be reviewed again in mid-February when the Government will look at when more pupils and students can be brought back into schools.

Read the full statement made by the Prime Minister - <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-to-the-house-of-commons-on-coronavirus-27-january-2021>

I know this is not the news that any of us wanted to hear. Remote learning is challenging and not as effective as face to face teaching as we all know. Please know that myself and all my staff welcome a return for all Bridgewater children as early as is safely possible. I will continue to update you with any information I receive.

Online Learning

Thank you to all the parents who completed the Remote Learning Parent Survey; your feedback is really important to us. I was delighted to share with teachers the overwhelming positive responses and uplifting messages. A special shout out to all our staff and parents for their amazing support can be found in this week's 'Special Mention' video - <https://youtu.be/wXv3Ep4A-rY>

Critical worker provision

Please only use this provision when it is absolutely necessary for you to complete your role as a critical worker. This is to keep our numbers in school as low as possible to avoid transmission of COVID-19.

Free School Meal (FSM)

Families in receipt of benefit related free school meals will receive support during the February half term. More information to follow next week.

Change4Life have created recipes and shopping lists for families which can be used to create lunches for around £15 each week. <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/lunch/cheap-lockdown-lunch-ideas>

This letter, and all other important messages, including an updated risk assessment, can be found on the Parent's COVID-19 page on our school website -

<http://www.bridgewaterprimaryschool.co.uk/covid-19-parent-updates/>

Please also have a look at our updated Online Learning page for easy access to helpful links and parent guides -

<http://www.bridgewaterprimaryschool.co.uk/online-learning/>

If you need any help or support, please contact school via telephone or email.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E Henderson