



Billingshurst Primary School
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Monday 11th January 2021

Urgent: requests for Keyworker places and updated symptom list

Dear Parents and Carers

Firstly I hope you are all well and that you managed to have a nice weekend despite the current difficulties. As it is Monday again, I know you will be returning to home learning. Please remember this is not a competition; do what you can and know your children's strengths so you can focus your support on what they find more difficult, and let them manage some areas they find easier on their own. It is fine to let, and expect, them to have some independence, especially older children - and remember we are here to help.

Over the weekend there have been changes to the guidance for critical and key workers. Schools are seeing a massive increase in demand in numbers since the first lockdown. I want you to be reassured that we will offer a place to all families that really need a place but please note that the guidance clearly states that **parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can**. If you are a critical worker who is on their own or are both keyworkers with no alternative, we will offer you a place. If one of you is working at home, please keep your child at home.

I know home learning is difficult, challenging and even harder when you are working from home. However, this pandemic is at a very serious stage, with hospitals at risk of being overwhelmed. Each social contact we have must be minimised. We need to stay at home and protect the NHS.

We are also very close to being at capacity in Year 4 and 5, with other year groups not far behind. We have vulnerable children who must be in school as well as critical workers who have no alternative. If we have to extend further, the support at home will reduce significantly as we bring teachers back in to school to teach face to face. Increasing numbers in school will also put safety at risk as social distancing becomes more and more difficult. Schools were closed because they are vectors of infection and this can only be controlled if numbers are kept low. In the first lockdown we averaged 35 children per day - we are now well over 110 per day and rising.

Please help us and only ask if there is no alternative. Please do not take offence when we make checks that there is no alternative and ask for evidence of keyworker status and employment. We may follow up with further checks - please do not be offended. We are trying to keep the school safe, support the essential workers and play our vital part in reducing the transmission of this virus as well as protecting school staff who have no choice but to come to work each day, increase their social mixing and increase their risk. We really, really appreciate your support with this. If you have had a place and feel you do not need it going forward, please call the school and let us know - we will be very grateful.

Kind regards

Helen Williamson
Headteacher