

Dear families,

As you are aware, the academy has remained open to the children of critical workers and to offer onsite provision for our most vulnerable children during the current national lockdown period. We are proud of the speed in which we were able to establish this following the Prime Minister's announcement on 5th January.

We know how much you as families value this provision and how this is supporting you to ensure that your child accesses learning whilst you carry out your wider commitments.

Unfortunately, earlier this week, we had to close the provision due to the adverse weather. I am sure that you will appreciate that the school is currently operating on a skeleton on-site staffing model as we are also running online remote provision for all children who are not in the school building. When the limited number of staff on site experience travel difficulties in getting to the school we cannot always guarantee that we will be able to offer the provision.

Whilst we understand that this causes an inconvenience to all who were expecting their child to attend school, we also fully appreciate that some of our critical workers are directly involved in the health and social care response to the pandemic. We know that we have parents and carers who are administering vaccines and others who are working on COVID wards within hospitals.

As a nation, we all know that our recovery from the pandemic is dependent on this response and we as an academy want to ensure that we are doing all that we can to support this.

For this reason, we have established an emergency adverse weather response to the provision of critical worker places. On days where we are adversely affected by low staff availability due to adverse weather we will always do all that we can to open to all of the children who are booked into the sessions; however if we cannot do this based on staffing numbers, rather than close to all we will prioritise places for health and social care workers. If we are then able to go beyond these numbers, we will seek to open to vulnerable children before looking at whether there are specific bubbles within the academy that we can remain open for.

During the closure day, we carried out some further resilience planning through contacting parents that fall into this category and have collected the information required in order to enact this. I would like to stress that this is an emergency contingency that we will only ever consider if we are faced with the decision to limit the number of children onsite due to the health and safety considerations in light of the staffing levels. We will continue to remain open to all critical workers and vulnerable children throughout the national lockdown unless we are presented with such challenges. This is therefore not a change to our current approach. We did however feel that it was important to communicate this and explain our thinking in advance of any instance where it may need to be actioned.

To summarise:

- If a closure is enforced, a text will be sent as previous, and online learning will continue as normal for those at home.

Outwood Grange Academies Trust is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (No. 06995649)
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- Parents who fall into this category of priority health and social care have already been contacted by the academy. If staffing is available, children of families in this group may be able to attend on site provision. On the day of enforced closure, we will contact you by text message informing you if this is a possibility.
- We will continue to review the situation and if additional capacity is available to support other critical worker groups, we will contact you directly to offer this.

Should you wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L Hadfield', is shown within a light grey rectangular box.

Mrs L Hadfield

Principal