



St. Peter's Church of England Primary School

School Road
Heysham
Lancashire
LA3 2RF
01524 852155

Headteacher Mrs N. Gomersall BA (Hons) QTS



3rd January 2021

Dear Parents/carers of Sanderling Class,

Firstly, Happy New Year to you all and I hope that you were able to enjoy a peaceful and Happy Christmas with those you love.

I am writing with a heavy heart to inform you that we are unable to open Sanderling Class tomorrow to any children other than Critical Worker/ Vulnerable children. This means that only the children who attended school during lockdown should attend school tomorrow morning from this class. We are currently doing an up-to-date survey as we know things may have changed.

The reason we are unable to open is that in line with Union recommendations, a small number of school staff have notified me over the course of Saturday evening and Sunday morning that they are exercising their right to refuse to work in what they consider to be an unsafe environment.

This is in no part due to a lack of confidence in school systems, which were very successful in preventing the spread of the virus during the autumn term. Their decision is solely based upon Union advice that the new variant of Covid which has resulted in an increase in transmission and infection rates currently being recorded across England. In their letters provided by their Union they state that:

“The most recent advice from SAGE is that schools should not open in January other than for children of key workers and vulnerable children. This is because the scientific advice is that it is not safe for schools to open. There are new variants of Covid-19 that are highly infectious and infection rates have increased significantly since schools closed. I appreciate that measures have been in place since September to allow the school to open but according to SAGE those measures may no longer be sufficient.”

These staff are willing to support critical worker/ vulnerable child provision from Monday 4th onwards and to support home learning which will be in place from Tuesday 5th onwards. Many of the staff are bitterly disappointed that the planning and preparation they had all made for the coming term has been disrupted in this manner.

I know that this will create many difficulties for you due to the timing of this letter and the practical complexity of home learning. I have tried to answer some of the questions you may have below, but am happy to answer any questions directly via the school e-mail address; bursar@stpetersheysham.lancs.sch.uk

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why has this decision been so late?



Unions have responded to the decision to close London Primary schools that was announced on Friday afternoon. They issued guidance to all members on Saturday afternoon and I asked staff to let me know their decisions in good time for me to notify governors and parents and Local Authority.

2. Why do staff feel that school is more unsafe now?

All of the staff members who have sent me their letters have made clear how difficult it has been to make this decision and that they wish it were not necessary to take this action.

They will be happy to return to the workplace once SAGE is satisfied that the R rate has decreased, scientific advice has been produced on safety measures required to make schools more "Covid secure", risk assessments have been updated and any necessary further safety measures implemented, regular testing is in place and more people are vaccinated.

3. How will my child access lessons from home?

We will use Showbie as the forum for online learning.

4. When will Sanderling Class fully open?

This is a difficult question to answer, but we are being led to believe that our move to on-line learning will last until at least the 18th January, matching what happens in Secondary schools. We will reopen fully as soon as we are able to.

We do not want to take this action any longer than it is necessary to do so and please rest assured that we will be acting tirelessly to fully reopen school as soon as it is safe and possible to do so.

5. Is it safe for Critical Worker/ Vulnerable children to attend school?

The fact that we can keep numbers low enough will mean that we can keep bubble sizes very low in a classroom and considerably increase the expectations within our risk-assessment.

6. Why are different schools doing different things?

Not all teachers and support staff are in the same unions and those who are in the Unions concerned have all made decisions based upon individual circumstances. This means that different schools will have different levels of staff participation in following this Union action.

Yours sincerely,



Nicola Gomersall

Headteacher