

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January

Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy New Year: I do hope that you all had a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas even if it was a little different to your usual celebrations.

Following on from all the discussions over the weekend and last night's announcement I am writing to give you further information re: the status of Benton Dene School. As a special school we are open for ALL pupils and will continue to be so throughout this current period of national lockdown dependent on staffing levels.

Some of you have chosen not to send your child into school this morning due to your concerns re: either their or your own health. We will be sending home work for your child to complete on a regular basis and ask that you support your child in engaging with this. It is vitally important that all children have the same opportunities to learn and make progress and we would not want any child to be disadvantaged in terms of their education because of their health needs.

We have secured a number of iPads and laptops which can be loaned to pupils who are working at home in order to support them in accessing online learning. If you feel that your child would benefit from such a loan, please contact either Yvonne Manton or Tina Steele who will facilitate this.

In order to ensure the correct staffing levels in school, prepare and plan for home learning and reduce the risk of infection by children coming into school on an ad hoc basis, can I ask that if you have decided to keep your child at home that you keep to that decision. We would only be able to accommodate a change to your plans in exceptional circumstances and following a discussion with myself.

As I am sure you will understand we may still have to ask 'bubbles' to self-isolate due to being a direct contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Similarly, should your child display symptoms we will also contact you and ask that you support us by collecting your child from school asap. On rare occasions, if we have staff absences we may need to ask some children in a particular 'bubble' to stay at home for a short period of time: this would be so that we didn't need to increase the risk of infection by bringing in supply staff.

We have asked staff to wear face coverings in communal areas in school and also outside at the start and end of the day. Could I politely request that if you bring/collect your child from school you support us by doing the same?

We realise this continues to be a difficult, uncertain time for children and yourselves and we extend to you our heartfelt thanks for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. McAllister'.

Alison McAllister

Headteacher