



4<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I do hope that you have had a good Christmas and I would like to wish you all a happy new year.

Firstly, I would like to apologise for writing to you while the school is still on its Christmas break. The rise in Covid cases and our subsequent move to Tier 4, combined with the new variant of COVID 19, has led to concerns regarding the health and safety of both pupils and staff. I am sure that you are aware that this is a national issue and many primary schools across the country are grappling with this. I know I have taken many phone calls today asking about safety in schools. I hope my reply has been fully understood and appreciated to those I have spoken to.

On Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> January and Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January, teaching staff and support staff received guidance from their professional associations strongly advising them not to attend work at the start of the Spring term but to be available to cover key worker provision and provide remote learning. The NAHT (headteachers' union) has initiated a legal challenge to the government's decision to reopen schools this week. The NEU (England's largest teaching union) and UNISON (support staff) has advised its members of their "legal right" not to return to their classrooms later this week amid serious health and safety fears regarding the current rate of infection of coronavirus. As a result of this, we may have staffing shortages at Birklands Primary School.

I am sure that you will appreciate that the health and safety of our pupils and staff is of paramount importance and will always guide our decision making.

At this moment in time, Birklands will be fully open although it may be that not all children will be educated by their familiar adults,

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We expect to receive further information and guidance into school prior to the start of term and I will evaluate the situation on a daily basis. I will keep you informed of any updates and changes as soon as is possible.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or your child's class teacher via email or phoning school.

Many thanks for your continued support and understanding.

Best wishes for a safe and more certain 2021.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs Smith (Head of School)