



*Sacred Heart Catholic Primary  
School and Nursery*  
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5<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Review of Critical Worker pupil places in school**

You will know from my previous correspondence, that we have had to limit on-site places for children of critical workers. The decision to limit pupil numbers on-site continues to be based on what can be provided safely, whilst also fulfilling our duty to provide remote contingency provision for pupils at home. I am writing to provide you with further information related to this and updates on our current circumstances in school.

We continue to be in a position where we can only provide one class bubble per year group. We are not in a position to extend this offer due to a number of factors, but primarily limited staff capacity. We are sorry that this means that we cannot offer on-site provision for all those who have requested this.

We fully appreciate the difficulties our current limitations may be causing for affected parents. We are truly sorry for this. We recognise the difficulties that all parents/carers are facing in trying to support home learning, and how these difficulties are exacerbated by the need to fulfil work, whether that be defined as 'critical' by the government or not. However, the health and safety of children, staff and families is the most important factor that we are required to consider.

Since the middle of December, we have been suffering significant staffing pressures, which have worsened into January. I am providing further information to parents/carers on the current unique circumstances of our school to support your understanding of the level of difficulty we face, how these difficulties are not easily surmountable, and how they currently prevent us from extending our on-site provision. It is with sadness that I am sharing with you news that a significant number of our much-loved teaching staff are neither fit nor able to attend school presently due to number of reasons, including serious illness and bereavement. Sadly, the number of our staff affected is significant and the difficulties these individual staff members have experienced, understandably, has had some impact for our whole staff community.

As of this week, our staffing numbers continue to be depleted with 7 members of our teaching staff not being fit nor able to attend school; this equates to a reduction of more



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than 20% of our teaching workforce. This makes it impossible for us to currently extend our on-site provision further.

Please see below information relating to how our staffing levels relate to what can be offered in our on-site provision:

	% of teaching workforce required to offer on-site support for <u>one</u> bubble group for every year group	% of teaching workforce required to offer on-site support for <u>two</u> bubble groups for every year group*
<b>ON-SITE PROVISION</b>	For <u>one</u> class-bubble per year group on-site... 29% of the teaching workforce is required to safely enable on-site provision for 20% of pupils	For <u>two</u> class-bubbles per year group on-site... 52% of the teaching workforce is required to safely enable on-site provision for 39% of pupils
<b>REMOTE LEARNING</b>	52% of the teaching workforce is required to support remote provision (at home) for 80% of pupils	48% of the teaching workforce is required to support remote provision (at home) for 61% of pupils
<b>TOTAL STAFFING REQUIRED</b>	1 on-site bubble per year group + remote provision requires 80% teaching staff capacity	2 on-site bubbles per year group + remote provision requires 100% teaching staff capacity

As we are currently operating with only 80% of our teaching staff being fit to attend school, we are now running at full capacity with one class bubble per year group.

We have retained a waiting list for places for children of critical workers (those who requested places when we surveyed parents on 18<sup>th</sup> January). We have continued to review the attendance rates of the pupils who have been allocated places and consulted with critical-worker parents on their shift patterns and we have offered part-time provision where



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this has been available. I have also consulted with the Local Authority and our Trust in relation to whether a community hub approach could be provided for our excess numbers of pupils. This is not a feasible option as it would not be possible to operate this in the required COVID-safe way, with pupils from different schools mixing on different days.

We cannot currently identify a definite date when we will be able to resume full provision in school for those pupils who have requested this due to an uncertainty around staffing numbers in the coming weeks. We will continue to review this position on a weekly basis and we will extend our on-site provision when possible. If our staffing levels improve to the point where we *can* add additional class bubbles, priority will be given to our youngest pupils, whereby we will extend our provision in Nursery, then Reception, Year 1, and so on.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and all that you are doing to help your child(ren) adapt and cope with the demands of their new ways of learning, whether that be in school or at home. Senior leaders and school staff are also working tirelessly to meet the needs of pupils and their families.

Please continue to pray for all those affected by Covid-19, especially those who are unwell, or suffering in some other way. We are aware of the struggles that a number of our families have experienced during lockdown. Please continue to maintain contact with the school and know that we are here to support if your family is in need of help. We will continue to do all that we can to support during these difficult times. In school, we continue to hold all our children and their families in our thoughts and prayers and I would ask you, in turn, to keep our staff community in your thoughts and prayers as they work to support all the children and families of our community.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Janet Mullally  
Headteacher



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