

3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent and/or Carer

Happy New Year to you all. I hope that you all managed a lovely Christmas break despite the restrictions on us all during this time.

You will probably be aware from news and media coverage that Covid rates remain stubbornly high in and around Northampton. You may also have heard that nationally, school staff unions have expressed concerns about primary schools opening this week when national Covid rates are so high. Unions have advised their staff that, despite the best efforts of school leaders and Trusts, with large numbers of children in each class, the risk of infection is high with the new strain of the virus being so virulent and transmissible. Today, many of our dedicated and committed staff have expressed their concerns about their personal safety. As a result they are taking the advice of their unions and requesting to provide remote education or work in school with critical worker and vulnerable pupils only to limit numbers whilst the Covid rates remain so high.

As a result of this, combined with high staff absence as a result of Covid related self-isolation or illness, we have taken the very difficult decision to move NPAT schools to remote learning this week commencing 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Our schools will be open for critical worker and vulnerable children only during this time. This includes parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response and includes those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors including:

- Education and childcare settings
- Key public services
- Local and national government
- Processing, distribution and sales of food and other necessary goods
- Public safety and national security
- Utilities, communication and financial services
- EU transition response

Further information about critical worker and vulnerable children can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

The decision to move to remote learning for the majority of children this week will be reviewed towards the end of this week. This decision will be made in light of the data and any further national directives.

I fully appreciate and understand the inconvenience that this causes parents and apologise for the short notice regarding this. Our aim is always to keep schools open for all children as we firmly believe that this is the best place for children to be. However, during this difficult time, we simply do not have enough staff to open our schools safely.

Your school will be in touch with you tomorrow with further information regarding this. Thank you for your understanding at this very challenging time.

Yours sincerely

*Julia Redwards*

CEO Northampton Primary Academy Trust