



SIR TOM FINNEY COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

Ribbleton Hall Drive, Preston, PR2 6EE

Telephone No 01772 795749

Headteacher Mr Shaun Jukes PGCE, BPhil (special education)

Email mailmaster@stfch.lancs.sch.uk Website www.stfch.lancs.sch.uk

Facebook www.facebook.com/sirtomfinneycommunityhigh

January 18th 2021

Dear Parents/Carers and families

The country is into its 3rd week of the latest National Lockdown period and I felt it would be useful to communicate the latest DFE guidance that was issued to special schools late last week. In summary it brings together much of the advice and information and expectation being placed on special schools both prior to and since January 4th 2021.

It does indicate a slight shift by Government in the expectations on student admissions and this mirrors the message put out by Lancashire County Council last week.

It is now clear that whilst schools should still be open to the children of critical key workers or the most vulnerable, **the DFE is asking parents, even those who fall into the definition of critical key workers to keep their children home if they can.**

This recognises the constraints of school risk assessments particularly about 'safe' numbers of children in groups or bubbles to reduce contacts and transmissions meaning that schools simply cannot accommodate everyone. However, DFE is clear that each school is different in its circumstances, so does not define what 'safe' numbers within groups or bubbles should be.

It re-emphasizes:

The principle of 'Stay at home to be safe' applies more than ever.

It is important to communicate therefore that given the current guidance; school will have to limit numbers daily and this is a factor in decision making and risk assessment about availability of places in school during lockdown restrictions.

The priority individuals using this risk assessed approach for determining on site attendance are:

1. Those children who have a parent(s) listed as a critical key worker, *(evidence may be required from an employer to confirm this)* **and who cannot keep their child at home safely.** *This the link to check if you qualify as a critical key worker. [Children of critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/children-of-critical-workers-and-vulnerable-children-who-can-access-schools-or-educational-settings)*
2. Those children who have a safeguarding concern or social care input and it is agreed with social worker and family or residential settings that it would be safer and in the best interests of the child to be attending school.
3. Those children where it is deemed, via a risk assessment agreed between school and family, that they are vulnerable and it is safer and in the child's best interests to be attending school.



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Once a figure is reached, in a particular bubble, which school determines is the maximum safely allowable. It will not admit any further returning students over and above that number to that group. Each group will be treated differently because the nature, needs, awareness and understanding of individual students in each group is different and unique.

This support operational safety measures already in place as we continue to move forward under the current restrictions. Other arrangements can be considered if appropriate such as part time attendance.

All those young people not attending will then move onto the school's remote learning plan which will be discussed directly with parents by the class teacher or Head of Department to take into account family circumstances, needs and abilities of the young person.

(A detailed summary of the range of remote learning activity across the school will be available to view on the website from January 25th 2021.)

Please continue staying safe and **following the 'Hands, Face, Distance' messages**. Remember it is vitally important that:

- Any student with any of the symptoms (*new and persistent cough, temperature, loss of taste or smell*) must arrange to have a test and self-isolate for 10 days or until a negative test result has been received
- If a household member has symptoms that person gets a test and other family members including children must self-isolate for 10 days, or until a negative test result is received

Thank you for your continued patience and understanding in these most challenging of circumstances for all of us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Shaun Jukes'.

Shaun Jukes
Headteacher