



## Ashford Park Primary School

'Inspiring a love for lifelong learning'

3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

I write to endeavour to clarify the position regarding the return to school for children at Ashford Park as from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The Government has published a list of Local Authorities in Tier 4 where they feel primary schools should not reopen, and although Surrey and Spelthorne are in Tier 4, we are ***not*** on that list. Therefore, our start to term will begin as planned on 4<sup>th</sup> January.

Children who are deemed "clinically extremely vulnerable" will have received a letter from their doctor confirming this, and should not return on 4th January. With regard to children whose parents are deemed clinically extremely vulnerable, the DfE's guidance (published on 24<sup>th</sup> December) states "*Children and young people whose parents or carers are clinically extremely vulnerable can continue to go to school.*" For your information, the school is not obliged to provide remote learning if you choose to keep your child at home, if school remains open. Please find the latest school opening guidance link for your information: [Full Opening Guidance 30/12/2020](#)

Staff who are deemed "clinically extremely vulnerable" will also have received a letter from their doctor confirming this and therefore deployment of staff will need to be changed for this purpose and to accommodate other absences i.e. isolating throughout the coming weeks. We will endeavour to keep as much continuity as possible for the children, but need to be clear that currently this may not always be possible to achieve; keeping classes safely open will be our first priority.

We have been advised that Surrey Officers are working with the Government to 'better understand their decision making', and Surrey head teachers have asked the authority to write to our school communities to make Surrey's position clear during these unprecedented times.

We have been advised that these are the government factors that are being applied to decide as to whether primary schools should return as of Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021:

1. Rate per 100,000
2. Rate of increase in cases
3. Pressure within the NHS

With regards to point 3, 'Pressure within the NHS', Public Health England have stated that the hospitals in Surrey have not called a 'Critical incident'; apart from Frimley on the 31st December; but the Surrey Heath and borders hospitals are not at capacity, therefore, essentially from applying these factors we will not be told to close.

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Tarrant  
Ashford Park Primary School | Station Crescent | Ashford | Middlesex TW15 3HN  
T. 01784 250305 | [www.ashford-park.surrey.sch.uk](http://www.ashford-park.surrey.sch.uk)





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The confirmation that primary schools will open as usual on Monday will come as a relief to some families - and will create a great deal of anxiety to others. To those who feel anxious, please be assured that we are rigorously following the risk assessments and infection control measures laid down by the DfE, and will continue to keep these under review, following Government guidance.

As a school we are committed to doing whatever we can to protect children and staff whilst doing our very best to deliver learning within the Government expectations. We also have to be mindful that this is a changing situation, and the Government may make changes to their plans accordingly – which we will then have to implement. However, until that point, we have to work with the current expectations but will take this opportunity to assure you that we will be in touch if and when any further changes are made.

Thank you for your ongoing support; this is a particularly challenging context for everyone, and your kind words and support mean a great deal.

With kind regards,

Sarah Tarrant

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