

Dear Parent and Carer,

Thank you for the support you have shown our schools during this challenging time. In an ideal world all of our children would be in school right now. However, with Covid-19 spreading quicker than ever, we are writing to you to request your further support in helping us to protect those in our communities who are most likely to become seriously ill or die from this virus.

The government has asked everyone to consider carefully if their child needs a place in school. It is important to note that there are far more children attending this time compared to the first lockdown, when positive cases and hospitalisations were much lower. Chris Whitty, the Chief Medical Officer for England, has told us that we are entering the worst and most dangerous period of the pandemic. We know that one in three people with the virus has no symptoms and therefore any contact that any of us have with others outside our household is increasing the risk to our own health.

Currently many of our schools have up to 40% of children attending on site. In terms of class sizes we need to adhere to recommended distancing in order to keep everyone safe. As some teachers are delivering remote teaching, they cannot teach pupils in school at the same time. **This means that on safety grounds our schools may need limit the number of places offered to children of critical workers as they may not have sufficient staffing capacity available to accommodate all. This includes not always being able to accommodate a change of days or number of days.**

We recognise how difficult it is to have your child at home and hope that our improved remote learning offer has made this a little easier than the last time. We are reiterating the government's request and encouraging critical workers to consider carefully whether you need to take the place you have been offered.

Please also let your school know if technology is a barrier for you as we will try to help to resolve this for you. We look forward to the end of the lockdown and a time where the vaccination programme is having a positive effect and cases are reducing.

We hope you are safe and well.

Warmest regards,

Robert Farmer (CEO Hamwic Education Trust)

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