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Dear Parents and Carers,

First of all Happy New Year and I hope you had the best Christmas possible under the circumstances!

You may well have seen media speculation about the opening of schools. The most recent advice from SAGE, the scientists advising the government, is that schools should not open in January, other than for children of key workers and vulnerable children, because new variants of Covid-19 are leading to significantly increased rates of Covid-19 since schools closed for Christmas.

The Federation's governing body, following consultation with teaching teams and support staff and in consideration of the SAGE guidance, has taken the decision not to reopen the schools but to go to remote learning for all children other than critical worker children and vulnerable children.

We understand that the government plans to have testing in place for both staff and pupils and we hope to reopen the schools for all children as soon as possible. In any event we will review the position and update you on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Remote Learning Packs**

From the afternoon of Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January parents will be able to collect learning packs and, where families are isolating, packs will be delivered. Please look out for a text letting you know when the learning packs are ready for collection.

On Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January all parents will be contacted by a member of staff explaining what is happening. We know it is challenging and we will understand if your child cannot complete all of the work.

### **Critical Worker children**

We will offer 8.45am-3.10pm places for all critical workers and our Breakfast club and After School club will run from 7.45am till 5pm for those who require wrap around care. The usual charges will apply for wrap around care; we are unable to offer this free of charge as we are currently running the provision at a loss.

If you are a Critical Worker (please see government definition of a Critical Worker at the end of this letter) and require a place in school for your child or children please complete the MS form that accompanies this letter by 10am Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January. You will need to fill in one form per child.

Please be aware that children who come into school may not be taught by their usual teacher and will be working through their home learning packs as the children will be doing at home. For vulnerable families, a member of staff will be in contact tomorrow to offer your child a place in school.

Please be assured that the governors and staff have not taken this decision lightly but we must ensure that everyone who is part of our school community remains as safe as possible. Thank you all for your unending support. We will get through this together.

Yours sincerely



Executive Headteacher  
The Kennet Federation



Chris Robinson  
Chair of Governors  
The Kennet Federation

**Critical worker and Vulnerable pupil definition:**

[Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/critical-workers-and-vulnerable-children-who-can-access-schools-or-educational-settings)



[Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/critical-workers-and-vulnerable-children-who-can-access-schools-or-educational-settings)

This guidance has been updated to include information about the return to school and college in January, and includes the addition of those whose work is critical to EU Transition to the list of ...

[www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

**Vulnerable children and young people**

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
  - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
  - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
  - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
  - those living in temporary accommodation
  - those who are young carers
  - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
  - care leavers
  - others at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health

**Critical workers**

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections.

**Health and social care**

This includes, but is not limited to, doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

### **Education and childcare**

This includes:

- childcare
- support and teaching staff
- social workers
- specialist education professionals who must remain active during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response to deliver this approach

### **Key public services**

This includes:

- those essential to the running of the justice system
- religious staff
- charities and workers delivering key frontline services
- those responsible for the management of the deceased
- journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting

### **Local and national government**

This only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of:

- the coronavirus (COVID-19) response, and the delivery of and response to EU transition
- essential public services, such as the payment of benefits and the certification or checking of goods for import and export (including animal products, animals, plants and food), including in government agencies and arms length bodies

### **Food and other necessary goods**

This includes those involved in food:

- production
- processing
- distribution
- sale and delivery
- as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines)

### **Public safety and national security**

This includes:

- police and support staff
- Ministry of Defence civilians
- contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and EU transition)
- fire and rescue service employees (including support staff)
- National Crime Agency staff
- those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas

### **Transport and border**

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response and EU transition, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass and those constructing or supporting the operation of critical transport and border infrastructure through which supply chains pass.

### **Utilities, communication and financial services**

This includes:

- staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure)
- the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage)
- information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response
- key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services)
- postal services and delivery
- payments providers
- waste disposal sectors