



Good Afternoon,

Despite all the challenges we face, we hope all our families enjoyed the break.

I am writing to you this afternoon, due to the rapidly changing situation, in respect of primary children returning to school this January.

As you may be aware, the UK is currently seeing a dramatic increase in the cases of COVID19 primarily linked to the new, more infectious strain of the virus. Of the four UK nations different countries have adopted different approaches. Last week in England, due to the concerns about transmission rates and the likely impact of NHS services, with the exception of critical workers, vulnerable pupils and some key exam year students, the government directed all secondary schools and some primary schools to switch to remote learning until the 18<sup>th</sup> of January.

Pressure has been mounting over the weekend for the government to apply this to all primary schools in England, but at present the advice is for schools to remain open. However, due to the safety concerns some staff have been advised, by their unions, it is not currently safe to reopen. We therefore wish to advise you, that due to reduced staffing ratios we are not in a situation to safely, fully reopen school on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

From **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January** all vulnerable pupils, including those children with Educational Health Care Plans and those whose parents are critical workers will be able to attend. All other children will continue to work remotely for the remainder of the week. Please contact the school if you need a device for your child or internet access. This situation will be reviewed and an update issued to families no later than Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January.

If you are a critical worker place and you have not received confirmation of an allocated place please text or email the school on [slt@thomasgrayprimary.co.uk](mailto:slt@thomasgrayprimary.co.uk) to arrange your child's place.

This is not a decision we have taken lightly; we truly appreciate the pressures this places families under and we very much hope we can work with the LA, Unions, the DFE and Public Health England to safely resume whole school, face-to-face teaching ASAP.

Our priority continues to be the safety of our whole school community and we thank you for your continued support in this respect.