



## The Willows Catholic Primary School

Headteacher: Mrs. S. A. Barnett  
Victoria Road, Kirkham, PR4 2BT  
Telephone & Fax: 01772 684371  
www.willows.lancs.sch.uk

6<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents,

What a strange start to the New Year we have all had! On 4 January 2021, the government announced that most schools would close to the majority of pupils from 5 January. However, it also stipulated that schools would remain open for vulnerable pupils and children of key workers. It is important to stress that this facility is only for emergency childcare, for key worker families, on the days that they are working. The safest place for children to be is at home but for some families this is not possible, as they have to attend work away from home.

The government's revised key worker list and the stipulation that any child with one parent who is a key worker is putting many schools under significant pressure including ourselves. In our school almost 90% of our families meet the criteria. With the greatest will in the world, we cannot offer places to all our families and maintain a Covid secure environment for the children and staff in our school.

Unfortunately, we have had no choice but to prioritise the applications. In the absence of any clear advice from the government, we have used the following criteria (as recommended by the National Association for Head Teachers):

- Vulnerable children.
- Children where **both** parents are key workers or children with single parents who are key workers with NHS and education key workers taking priority.
- Children where only one of two parents is a key worker with NHS and education key workers taking priority.

We have risk assessed how many children and staff can operate in our classroom bases and have created 4 bubbles.

- Reception and Year 1 are in the Reception classroom
- Year 2 and Year 3 are in the Year 3 classroom
- Year 4 and Year 5 are in the Year 5 classroom
- Year 6 are in the Year 6 classroom

Each 'bubble' is being staffed by the Teaching Assistants who usually work in these classes whilst teachers are planning, uploading, marking and from next week will be also teaching some lessons via Microsoft Teams (details regarding this will be sent out separately). Each bubble is accessing the same work as the rest of their class who are working from home and they are NOT receiving 'additional teaching'.

We have more than 70 children accessing our Key Worker Club and simply cannot safely add any more children to the list. All our staff are working full-time and we are stretched to our limit. I realise that this means that this has left some parents frustrated and disappointed but we have to put the health and safety of our children and staff first.

There are several ways that parents and carers can continue to access childcare:





## The Willows Catholic Primary School

Headteacher: Mrs. S. A. Barnett  
Victoria Road, Kirkham, PR4 2BT  
Telephone & Fax: 01772 684371  
[www.willows.lancs.sch.uk](http://www.willows.lancs.sch.uk)

- Vulnerable children and children of critical workers can continue to use registered childcare, childminders and other childcare activities.
- Parents are able to form a childcare bubble with one other household for the purposes of informal childcare, where the child is under 14. This is to enable parents to work but must not be used to enable social contact between adults.
- Some households will also be able to benefit from being in a support bubble.

School is not the only place that families can access childcare support.

I hope you understand that we are all trying to do our absolute best for our children, families and staff. The single most important action we can all take to protect the NHS and save lives is to stay at home.

Please stay safe and well.

Best wishes,

Mrs Barnett  
Headteacher

