

Our Ref JK/PAs
Your Ref
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Please ask for Julien Kramer
Direct Line 0161 253 5477
E-mail j.kramer@bury.gov.uk

Department for Children and
Young People

Parents /Carers of children and young people
in Bury schools

Julien Kramer
Interim Assistant Director
(Education and Inclusion)

Dear Parent/Carer

COVID-19 UPDATE FOR PARENTS – NATIONAL LOCKDOWN ARRANGEMENTS

We had hoped to be welcoming all primary pupils and, under a phased approach, all secondary pupils back into Bury schools following the Christmas break. However, we are now in a very different situation with the national lockdown announcement on 4 January, the unprecedented pressure on NHS services and the urgent need for everyone to avoid contact with people from outside their household, if at all possible. The announcement means that Bury schools have moved to remote learning for most pupils, with the exception of special schools and alternative provision.

Our schools continue to review the risk assessments that they put in place at the start of the first national lockdown to ensure that risks are minimised. The key is to keep the number of contacts as low as possible in order to minimise opportunities for the virus to be transmitted. Schools will keep pupils who are attending in 'bubbles' as far as is possible to support this.

Every school is unique and its capacity, following its COVID-19 risk assessment, will depend on the size of rooms, number of rooms and available staffing. **Places are available to all vulnerable pupils. Places are also available to children of critical workers, if they cannot be kept at home.**

The Department for Education updated its guidance 'What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges' on 8 January 2021. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

Vulnerable Pupils

Bury schools are open to **all** vulnerable pupils. If your child is identified as vulnerable then **they should be in school** unless they are shielding or self-isolating. We strongly encourage you to send your child into school. If you are unsure and have any concerns about your child returning then please discuss this with the school.

Critical Worker Children

Bury schools are also open to children in families where at least one parent is a critical worker **and** you are unable to keep your child at home. A critical worker is someone whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response. The message is clear. **If you are a critical worker and you can keep your child at home then you should do so.** Please discuss your needs with your child's school.

The government's definitions of vulnerable pupils and critical workers can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision#vulnerable-children-and-young-people>.

Nursery Provision

Where possible nursery schools, and nursery provision in schools, should be open to all children. Places are available for all vulnerable children and children of critical workers. The capacity to open to other children will be based on the individual school's risk assessment.

Special Schools and Alternative Provision

If your child attends a Bury special school or Spring Lane School, these schools will continue to be open to all pupils, unless they are shielding or self-isolating or the school does not have capacity, for example, due to staffing levels.

Millwood Primary Special School is due to re-open to pupils on 25 January 2021 following remedial works to the school building.

Remote Education

If your child is not attending school then remote learning will be in place for them. It is important that you work with your child encouraging them to engage fully with the remote learning. There is guidance for parents/ carers on keeping children safe online available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online>. Schools have developed their approaches to remote learning since the first national lockdown however if you are experiencing any difficulties in accessing the remote learning then please contact your school.

Public Health England Advice

Please continue to follow the health advice on coronavirus. If your child shows any of the three main symptoms of COVID-19 then they should be kept off school, tested as soon as possible and the school kept informed. This is to keep all as safe as possible. The three main symptoms are:

- a high temperature – this means they feel hot to touch on their chest or back; if you have a thermometer and are able to take the child's temperature this means a temperature higher than 37.8°C
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Rapid Testing in Secondary Schools

If you have a secondary school aged child then their school may be taking part in the rapid asymptomatic testing programme. The testing will be used to test those pupils who are attending school. Whilst the testing is voluntary we strongly encourage those who are eligible to take part to help reduce the risks of transmission in education settings.

Families and schools have both needed to change their plans for this term quickly, thank you to all of you. I am sure that we share the wish that all our pupils are back in school at the earliest opportunity. We need to continue to work together in order to achieve this wish therefore I urge families to follow the restrictions under this national lockdown.

Yours sincerely



Julien Kramer
Interim Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion
Children and Young People

Electronic or fax service of Legal documents is not accepted

3 Knowsley Place, Duke Street, Bury, BL9 0EJ

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