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4th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

It is with regret that I am writing to inform you of changes to school opening in January. You will probably be aware through media coverage that there has been much discussion around the safety of reopening primary schools.

The scientific evidence suggests that the infection rate in children is rising. The most recent advice from SAGE is that schools should not open in January other than for children of key workers and vulnerable children. This is because the scientific advice is that it is not safe for schools to open. There are new variants of Covid-19 that are highly infectious and infection rates have increased significantly since schools closed. Over the Christmas period I was in contact with Public Health England reporting positive cases up till Christmas Eve.

Based on the above, teacher unions do not believe that it is safe for teachers to return to full classes. This advice means that Ashwood Park is not able to open to all pupils from Tuesday 5th January until further notice. Remote learning will happen every day and a learning pack can be collected from school from Tuesday 5th January. Please come to the school office and we will present these to you for your child. All pupils have a login for Purple Mash too. We also have our on-line reading scheme- Bug Club and Times Table Rock Stars. It is expected that ALL children will complete the work and staff will be following this up regularly. Staff will feedback to work directly and may make contact by phone to give support. If you are unable to access this online learning you must contact your child's teacher.

If your child is eligible for free school meals and you wish school to provide a packed lunch, (ham or cheese grab bag) please contact the school through info@ashwood.dudley.sch.uk. These can be collected from school from Wednesday from 11.30am. **This service is only for assessed free School Meals.**

School will remain open for children with Educational Health Care Plan, children of key workers and those children considered vulnerable or children looked after. NURSERY IS CLOSED.

If you are a key worker and wish for your child to attend school you must email school at info@ashwood.dudley.sch.uk providing your child's name, class, your job role and the name of your employer before midday Tuesday 5th January. This will allow us to prepare for opening on Wednesday 6th January. **Year 3/4 will start on Thursday 7th January.** The groups will be taught in phases (Reception, Yr1/2, Yr 3/4 and Yr 5/6).

If your child is attending school – the same start and finish times apply, and entry and exit points as before Christmas. It is crucial that your child arrives to school on time. Breakfast club and after school club are not available. Children must attend in School Uniform.

Please do not hesitate to contact school if you have any queries. We appreciate that this situation will cause disruption and inconvenience and hope that it is not too long before it is deemed safe to welcome all children back to school.

Yours sincerely,
Keith Butler. Head Teacher

