



## BLACKMINSTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Acting Headteacher: Ms Linda McQuone BSc(Hons), MA(Ed), PGCE, NPQH, MCCT

Station Road, South Littleton, Evesham  
Worcestershire, WR11 8TG  
Telephone: 01386 830311  
office@blackminster.worcs.sch.uk  
www.blackminster.worcs.sch.uk

5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear and parents and carers,

You will of course be aware that the national picture during the COVID-19 pandemic is changing rapidly, and advice to schools seems to change almost daily! I will keep you updated as regularly and quickly as I can over the next few days and weeks. Some of the information in this letter will be a repeat of information you've received before, but I feel it's important for everyone to have the whole picture.

### **National Lockdown**

Yesterday evening the Prime Minister announced that a [new national lockdown](#) will come into force at 00:01 on Wednesday 6 January.

During the period of national lockdown, schools will remain open to vulnerable children and young people and the children of [critical workers](#) only. All other children and students will learn remotely until February half term.

The government agree with our view that receiving face-to-face education is best for children's mental health and for their educational achievement. They will be reviewing the restrictions on schools, and have undertaken to ensure that children and young people return to face-to-face education as soon as the pressures are easing on the NHS. Limiting attendance is about reducing the number of contacts between people in different households, therefore reducing transmission of the virus.

### **Children who can attend school**

During the period of national lockdown, the only children who will be able to attend school are those who are "vulnerable" and the children of critical workers who need to be at work and therefore cannot provide supervision for their children's education at home. The definitions of these terms can be found at this link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

The critical worker list has been updated since the last national lockdown to include new workforces whose work is critical following the end of the EU transition period.

If your child is eligible to be cared for at school, please could you complete the booking form that will be sent out in the first part of each week, and return it to us by midday on each Thursday. This will enable us to plan our provision and staffing for the following week. Please note that children who are on site will not be expected to wear uniform, but should wear clothes appropriate for a day at school. They will need to bring a packed lunch on days that they are attending, as we will not have catering facilities on site. If your child has headphones, these may be useful for some of the online work set.

### **Educational provision for all students**

All students, whether they are at home or on site, will be following the same educational program. This is provided by teachers and published on our Show My Homework platform. All students and parents have access to this, either on a computer, tablet or a smartphone app. Teachers will make it clear how work is to be submitted, and students will receive regular feedback on their work. It is therefore vitally important that your child accesses the work daily, and completes tasks to the best of their ability – just as they would if they were in lessons as usual.

We appreciate that managing competing commitments is hard for students and parents, so we are making our provision as flexible as possible (for example, we are not insisting on children being on line to follow a daily timetable), and as from next week work will be set in “chunks” that will last roughly an hour each. We hope that this will help students to manage their lessons, because if they complete the tasks on the day they are set it will stop them building up and creating a workload crisis! Please do let us know if there is any more support that you need (or if you need things like paper or exercise books)

In addition to their lessons, we are exploring possibilities for a regular, weekly “live” session for tutor groups. This will take place at a regular time and will be hosted by Microsoft “Teams” – you will be receiving details of these meetings and instructions on how to join over the next few days.

Your child’s tutor will be making contact with you by phone or email each week, just to “check in” and to answer any questions or issues that you may have. Staff will be working, either remotely or on the site during normal school hours, so please do contact us if you need to, just as you would under normal circumstances. Students can use the messaging facility on Show My Homework or emails to contact staff and can submit work in a variety of ways– for example

- A) Submitting via Show My Homework
- B) Email
- C) Paper copies kept at home and submitted when we return to face to face learning

### **Keeping you updated**

Communication between home and school is always important, and particularly so at present. We will keep you informed as much as we can. We will be using text messages, Facebook, and emails like this one. Please note that all letters will be made available on our website so that you are always up to date.

Thank you again for all of your support for our school through the current situation. I look forward to seeing children and yourselves again in person as soon as we can do so safely.

Kind regards



Linda McQuone  
Acting Headteacher

