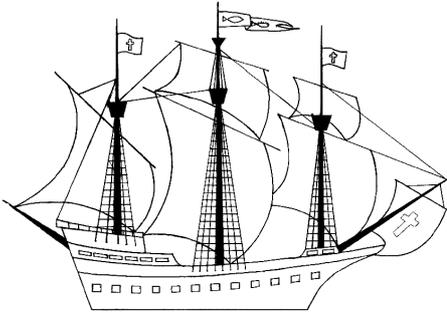

Dawpool C.E (Aided) Primary School

. . . Growing the Fruit of the Spirit

*'The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness & Self Control'
(Galatians 5:22-23)*



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Head Teacher: Mr D. Burrows MA, NPQH

6th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Provision for children of critical workers

On Monday 4th January at 8pm schools were notified of the national lockdown at the same time as the rest of the population. The lockdown is now law and we are doing our best to respond to this situation quickly and carefully.

We are coming under increasing pressure from parents to justify our decision to allocate places for pupils based on **both parents** being critical workers. Parents are quoting the Department for Education (DfE) guidance which states that one parent should be a key worker. **This is guidance only.** There will be substantial variations in how the guidance impacts individual schools across the nation. Most of our families have one parent who is a key worker. If we applied the DfE guidance without due diligence our pupil attendance would increase significantly and the school would be close to full capacity. This would pose an unacceptable risk to our school community.

Demand for school places is high. We have very limited places available due to the necessity of keeping this provision at the correct scale to protect both our staff and the children who attend. If the provision is too large it negates any benefits of the social distancing measures the government has imposed and through associated contacts children, families and staff will be exposed to unacceptable risk. If the provision is too large, we will be unable to sustain the high staffing levels required if staff become unwell or need to self-isolate.

This is not 'business as usual' and all medical advisers are clear that the safest place for children and families is **at home with as little social contact as possible.** These emergency school places are intended for families who have **no other adult at home or a support bubble** to look after children and who are immediately required in the response to this virus.

'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord. 'Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future.' (Jeremiah 29:11)

The DfE have advised schools to implement measures which are safest for their particular circumstances. Teaching unions also stipulate that *'if eligible numbers rise beyond that which is deemed to be safe this will need to be managed through stricter application of the criteria'*. The Local Authority has also said that *"we will understand and support whatever decisions are made by individual schools."*

We currently have one third of our pupils attending school and we are under pressure from parents to provide more places. We do have enormous sympathy for parents who feel that under government guidance their child is entitled to be in school, but the safety of our whole school community is paramount and opening the school to more pupils is unsafe at the present time.

We have made online learning available to all pupils working at home. I will be writing to parents later this week with further information about the remote offer from Monday 11 th January.

Yours sincerely,



David Burrows
Head Teacher