



**Melanie John-Ross, Executive Director
CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

To:
All Parents & Carers of Barnsley School
Children

Date: 22 January 2021
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Dear Parents and Carers

I want to thank each and every one of you, for all that you are doing by following the rules during this national lockdown, helping to keep your families and our communities safe from Coronavirus.

Our current infection rates have been relatively steady but are still very high, albeit much lower than many parts of the country, so it is still really important that we all maintain all of our efforts, to follow all the rules of the national lockdown.

Coronavirus has affected all of our lives and undoubtedly, children's education has been significantly disrupted, despite the excellent arrangements that Barnsley schools have put into place, to support remote home learning and to keep children safe, who are attending school. I remain confident that for children, schools are as safe as anywhere can be in our community, given the robust and strong controls that have been put into place in our schools.

During this national lockdown, the government have advised that all children and young people should stay at home and access education through remote learning. However, for families who need some additional support (referred to as vulnerable children) and children of a critical key worker parent, schools and colleges should remain open for these children.

We need our key workers across many services and organisations, to be able to carry out their critical roles to maintain critical services, in response to the pandemic.

Where key worker parent/s can work at home, alongside supporting their children's home learning, we strongly encourage you to do so. However, for others working and supporting your child's remote learning and education, will be almost, if not impossible.

We have reached a shared position with Barnsley Headteachers, agreeing that all vulnerable children and children of key worker/s, should be able to attend school, in line with government guidance. However, it is important to acknowledge that schools vary across the borough, in terms of their size, their capacity and the number of staff they employ, as well as the numbers of vulnerable and key worker children attending school. For some, there will be occasions where it will be extremely hard, to deliver both remote learning and, teach children who are in school.

In these circumstances, Barnsley Headteachers will need to make decisions, in discussion with individual parents, that are in the best interests for their school, subject to their capacity, and this will always be informed by their individual Coronavirus risk assessment.

Barnsley Council and Barnsley schools are firmly committed to delivering the best education to all children and young people in the borough. We want all pupils to be able to return to school immediately upon the government announcing the full reopening of schools and colleges nationally.

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However, at this time, we need to work together to support you, and our schools, to deliver high quality remote learning and education, whilst ensuring that the needs of children who do need to be at school, can be met.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mel John-Ross". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot at the end.

Mel John-Ross
Executive Director – Children's Services