



Our Ref: AJC/MS

11 January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: Amendment to Government Guidance for parents and carers who are Critical Workers

Please read the following information carefully, as it is about preventing the spread of Covid-19.

Last week, when I wrote to you, I asked all parents, who are classed as critical workers, to consider whether their children need to be in attendance.

What is the amended guidance for critical workers?

On 8 January 2021, the government updated their guidance on critical workers, which now reads as follows:

Critical workers

*Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections. Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school or college **if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.***

Why has the government changed their guidance?

As you will have seen in the local and national news, the government has changed this wording because there are parents throughout the country, including a number of our parents, who are sending their children into school, when they DO NOT need to be here.

The point of the government allowing children of critical workers into schools is as follows:

- To ensure parents who are critical workers can do their jobs, supporting vital services.
- To provide care for the children of critical workers who could not do their jobs, if the children were not in school.

However, the guidance is very clear in now stating that the children should only attend **if required** and even where parents are critical workers, **the children should still be kept at home if they can.**



Why is it important that I am making you aware of this change?

The reason for this letter is because we currently have a number of parents who are not abiding by this latest change and I appreciate that some of you may not be aware of this change. We currently have some children attending, who do not have to attend on a full-time basis because:

- We know that in some cases, though one parent is a critical worker, there is still another adult at home. In this case, the children are not required to be in and parents and carers should keep their children at home.
- We know that in some cases, parents are working on a part-time basis but sending the children in for the whole week, not when required. The children should be kept at home when the critical worker is not working or if there is another adult in the home who can look after them.
- We know that in some cases, though a parent is classed as a critical worker, they are not always working due to their current employment situation but still sending their children into school.

Why is it important that parents and carers, classed as critical workers, re-visit their wish for their children to attend during the lockdown period?

- Across the country, including at Pilgrim Academy, the numbers of children attending during lockdown is significantly higher than during the first lockdown – when the situation is now MORE critical across the country. For example, during the first lockdown, on average we had less than 10 children attending daily. We now have between 60 and 70 attending every day, on average.
- The point of lockdown is to ensure that as few people as possible come into contact with each other. That is why the children of critical workers should only attend when they absolutely have to.
- Children who are attending when they do not have to, increase numbers and therefore, increase the size of bubbles, making it more difficult to socially distance and prevent the spread of the virus.
- Ultimately, parents who send their children in when they do not have to attend, put their own children at greater risk; put their own families at greater risk; put other children and their families at greater risk; put staff at greater risk.

We have always done and will continue to do everything we can to support families and children during the lockdown period, including those of critical workers. Where children have to attend, we will always support you and that will never change. It is important to stress that I know that in most cases, parents and carers, who are critical workers, do have to send their children into school and that is, of course, absolutely fine and acceptable.



Pilgrim Academy



However, if I did not make this point and plea to those small minority of parents, I would not be doing my job to protect the children, families and staff who absolutely do have to be here.

Following this letter, please contact the Academy via phone or email at enquiries@pilgrimacademy.co.uk if you wish to amend the times when your child or children are in attendance.

Many thanks for your support in this very important matter.

Yours faithfully

Mr A J Clark
Principal