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Ref: HF/GK/KR  
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Dear Parent/Carer

As you know there is a further national lockdown in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19. This does not suggest that schools and colleges are no longer safe places for young people but rather that by limiting attendance it reduces the number of contacts that all of us have with people in other households.

The new restrictions mean that schools, colleges, alternative provision and special schools will remain open but only for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children to attend on site. All other pupils and students will receive remote education until February half term at the earliest and, in accordance with national guidance, must remain at home.

This is a key element of the campaign to successfully protect the NHS and reduce the transmission of the virus. As a result of the new restrictions our schools and colleges are having to make difficult decisions as to how they can safely accommodate children and young people at school and how many such children they can have in school at any time

### **Vulnerable children and young people**

We expect the attendance of these children to be the priority of our schools. If your child has an education, health and care (EHC) plan and/or an allocated social worker they should attend their school or college. If you do decide to keep your child at home and you need additional support, please contact your school and they will work with the local authority to support you. The DfE definition of vulnerable children and young people who can access their school or college can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision#vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

### **Children of critical workers**

Schools are being asked to remain open to the children of workers who are critical to the COVID-19 response and EU transition, that are unable to safely stay at home. We are working with our schools to ensure that the number of children and young people accessing the offer of provision in a school or college can be managed in a COVID safe way. Therefore, even if you are a critical worker;

- If your child(ren) can remain at home rather than attend school, on some or all days, then they should.
- Only use the offer of provision when it is crucial to enable you to undertake your critical role.

The list of critical workers can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

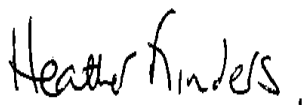
If your child's school or college feels that your role does not fit the critical worker criteria, you may be asked to verify this with a letter from your employer as to why you personally are critical to the COVID-19 response or EU Transition. If there is an alternative adult such as partner or second parent who is not a critical worker, you may be asked why your child is not able to stay at home as per the Government's guidance. If the other adult is working at home or able to take leave from their non-critical job, this may be deemed as a safe alternative.

Schools, settings and colleges are being asked to remain open to provide care to enable critical workers to respond to the COVID-19 emergency. We are asking that you also support your school, setting and college and only use this offer of support if you have no alternatives for childcare for your child. We ask this as the more children and young people that attend an education setting the wider the risk of spreading the virus.

It will be the case that some of our schools, colleges and settings will be unable to safely offer places to the children of all critical workers that want to access this support. This is unfortunate however please be assured that all educational settings in Waltham Forest are opening to as many pupils as they safely can whilst also providing remote learning. As the Local Authority and in partnership with our schools, colleges and settings we will not open in a way that is not COVID-19 secure.

We ask for your understanding and cooperation in these challenging times.

Yours sincerely



**Heather Flinders**  
**Strategic Director of Families (DCS/DASS)**