



## HIGH HESKET C of E SCHOOL (VC)

High Hesket, CARLISLE, Cumbria CA4 0HU TEL: 016974 73386

Head teacher: Mrs A Harvey

Email: [head@high-hesket.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:head@high-hesket.cumbria.sch.uk) Website: [www.high-hesket.cumbria.sch.uk](http://www.high-hesket.cumbria.sch.uk)

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents,

Over the last 24 hours, there has been a huge amount of information circulating about school reopening arrangements and safety concerns. This is certainly not how we hoped to be communicating with you all at the start of both a new year and a new school term but, unfortunately, circumstances are changing rapidly and the situation is incredibly challenging and concerning for us all. Yesterday, Cumbria Public Health shared their significant concerns regarding the high number of rising cases of the new variant in Carlisle and Eden and, as a result, requested that primary schools become part of the contingency framework. The Department for Education have since requested that Cumbrian primary schools remain open but that this will be held under review.

Since writing to you last we have engaged in further discussions with staff and Governors and much thought and consideration has gone into decisions on how best to act for the safety of our children and the community. There has been lots of new information and media reports circulating and we know several of you have contacted me already to express your own concerns and circumstances.

At the time of writing yesterday, we had hoped to have sufficient staffing and safety measures in place to be able to open safely as planned on Tuesday. However, circumstances have now changed as more information and guidance has become available and we are afraid we will no longer be able to offer our original plans of returning to full class teaching as normal. Staffing availability has reduced further due to changing personal circumstances, shielding advice, self isolation requirements and consultation with education union guidance.

As a result, **High Hesket CE School will now revert to online learning via Google Classroom and school will only be open to vulnerable children and the children of key workers from tomorrow.** The definition of these categories can be found within the government guidance at

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

and further details about how to access Google Classroom and other information you may need will be sent out later today.

This will be a challenging period and, as we are operating with reduced staffing and as teachers will be organising remote learning, places for the children of key workers will be limited and we do ask that this is only accessed if it is really needed. Any children attending school physically will be supported with accessing the remote learning materials and will receive the same input as those learning from home. **If you feel that you do require a key worker place, please notify the school as soon as possible by emailing [head@high-hesket.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:head@high-hesket.cumbria.sch.uk) so as we can organise our bubbles safely and arrange staffing.** Please be aware that the staff supporting the school bubbles may not be the normal staff assigned to that year group.

We will continue to monitor the situation and review circumstances regularly. However, we hope to be able to return all children to school by Monday 18th January 2021 if it is safe to do so. We fully appreciate that this decision will cause significant inconvenience for many of you and that the children will be disappointed not to be returning to see their friends. We are devastated to find ourselves in this position and we know that the last minute announcements are far from ideal. We are incredibly grateful for your understanding at this difficult time and our thoughts are with all our children and families as we start the year with more uncertainty.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs A Harvey  
Headteacher

Mr G Kidd  
Chair of Governors