

Further clarification for parents and carers who are Critical (Key) Workers: January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we endeavour to respond to the ever-changing landscape in regard to this pandemic and the current Government lockdown, our first and foremost priority has to be the safety of our students, staff, and families. Across the country, including at Arena 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 20 children attending daily. We now have between 50 and 60 attending every day, on average.

As a school we are open and will remain open for all of our vulnerable students and students of critical workers, this is from year 7 up to Year 11, this is in line with the Government Guidance: [Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - GOV.UK](#)

Further guidance from the DfE issued this week; [Restricting attendance during the national lockdown: schools](#) states that:

“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. Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school if required. This includes parents who may be working from home.

*Schools should speak to parents and carers to identify who needs to go to school. If it proves necessary, schools can ask for simple evidence that the parent in question is a critical worker, such as their work ID badge or pay slip. **Parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can.**”*

We are currently supporting students from all Year Groups in school, we are delivering remote education to all of our students and we are dealing with an ever-changing picture in regard to staff absences. The support we offer to our students’ families is central to all we do and we will continue to offer the best provision we can whether students are at home or in school. In line with this newest guidance, we are asking you all to consider whether your children need to come into school, whether they need to come every day and whether they are able to learn from home. 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.

This week we will be contacting all of our families who have children attending school to ensure we are keeping all of our school community safe and where possible reduce the number of children we have in school each day which in turn will reduce the risk of transmission. We will also be reassuring you that your children have a space in school where they need it and we will continue this support throughout the period of lockdown.

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.

We thank you for all of your ongoing support, the support you are giving your children and welcome you to contact us if there is any further support we can offer.

Kind Regards,

Claire Kilroy
Deputy Headteacher