

# LEYBOURNE SS PETER & PAUL C E PRIMARY ACADEMY



Headteacher: Tina Holditch

Rectory Lane North  
Leybourne  
West Malling  
Kent  
ME19 5HD

Tel: 01732 842008

Email: [headteacher@leybourne.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@leybourne.kent.sch.uk)  
[www.leybourne.kent.sch.uk](http://www.leybourne.kent.sch.uk)

31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents

I hope you had as good a Christmas as possible given the current situation. I know it certainly was not the Christmas we had planned. For so many of us, it definitely felt as though the prize was snatched away from us at the last moment - having worked so hard to get through the term, realising that we would not be able to celebrate Christmas in our family bubbles as we had hoped was a bitter pill to swallow. Let's hope that next year will be better, and we will indeed be able to celebrate with our loved ones.

I am so sorry to disturb your Christmas break by writing to you, but, as I am sure you will have heard yesterday, I am afraid that the Government have taken the decision that schools in areas of the country which are at the most acute risk of infection will be closed for the majority of pupils. It appears that the new strain of COVID-19 remains prevalent in our local area, and, until the rate of infection decreases and the capacity within the NHS to cope with the expected influx of cases increases, we must do all we can to reduce the spread of the infection. To this end, *our school will be closed to all pupils except those whose parents are classed as essential workers, and those pupils who are considered to be vulnerable.*

This measure will be reviewed by the Government every two weeks and means that families will need to plan for children to be learning at home at least until Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January. We are likely to know towards the end of the week beforehand whether the decision is to return on 18<sup>th</sup> January, or whether remote education will need to be extended further.

I know that we had a high number of essential worker and vulnerable pupils during the first lockdown. However, I would urge all parents to really consider the risk of sending your children to school at this time. We are being told we cannot open because the risk is too great. We are being told that we need to limit the number of interactions we have with adults and children to an absolute minimum. We did not see our families over Christmas because we were not allowed to leave our homes and mix with other households. I am, therefore, asking in the strongest possible terms, that *essential workers ONLY consider sending their children to school if there is no other safe alternative.*

We will contact parents of vulnerable pupils and those with EHCPs individually on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 to discuss appropriate provision and support. *Please be*

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in a caring, happy Christian environment**



*aware that even if we were able to offer a place to your child as a vulnerable child during the last lockdown, we may not be able to this time, due to the increased need for us to reduce risk and interaction as much as we possibly can.*

The situation is different to that of the previous lockdown. I know, from my husband's experience at his school, that with this new variant, children present without any symptoms and then spread the infection to each other, and also to adults – who quickly become very unwell. It is this situation that we must do all we can to avoid. If our staff become ill, the school cannot operate – either physically in the school building, or remotely. If you become ill, your lives are impacted - you cannot look after your children, and you cannot work. And that is the best case scenario – assuming it is a mild case. I really don't want to contemplate the worst case.

As I have said before, we are all incredibly grateful to those essential workers on the front line, who are dealing with the full impact of this pandemic. We are all in awe of your commitment and the sacrifices you, and your loved ones, make. We have members of staff whose relatives work in hospitals and deal with the reality of this situation every day. We remain committed to helping you as best we can by providing a place in school for your children, *if there is no safe alternative*. This does mean, however, that *if you, or a partner are at home, even if that involves working from home, we will expect your children to be at home with you. If one parent is not an essential worker, we would expect them to care for the children at home*. Please understand that I do appreciate the difficulties this can cause and that I am not trying to cause you additional problems, or, indeed, shirk our responsibilities in school. We are doing all we can to reduce the risk that we expose the children of critical workers to, and this includes minimising their contact with others. Medical professionals are already at huge risk, without us adding to it by exposing their children, and therefore them, to more people than strictly necessary.

At the end of this letter is a booking form for parents who are essential workers to use, to indicate their request for provision in school. Please return all forms to me via email – [headteacher@leybourne.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@leybourne.kent.sch.uk) – by the end of Friday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021. I will then email you over the weekend to confirm arrangements for your child from Tuesday. Please only use this option where there is no safe alternative. This may mean that your children are only in school for one or two days, depending on your work pattern – please do not think that your child has to come to school each day – they don't. We will be in school only to offer provision to children whose parents are physically out at work, in an essential role.

However, schools being closed for most pupils does not mean that education does not happen. We will be switching, with effect from Tuesday 5th January, to remote education.

You will have received a letter at the end of last term, giving details of Microsoft Teams, and how to use it. Children were shown how to access Teams in school at the end of term, and will be able to use it to access live and recorded lessons, and to access and return work. Children will also be able to use the message facility to message their teachers. Please note that this facility is solely for pupils to communicate with staff. If parents wish to contact teaching staff during this period, you are welcome to use the class email accounts that were set up last year. Please do remember to use the correct address for your child's new class!

[yearr@leybourne.kent.sch.uk](mailto:yearr@leybourne.kent.sch.uk)  
[year2@leybourne.kent.sch.uk](mailto:year2@leybourne.kent.sch.uk)  
[year4@leybourne.kent.sch.uk](mailto:year4@leybourne.kent.sch.uk)  
[year6@leybourne.kent.sch.uk](mailto:year6@leybourne.kent.sch.uk)

[year1@leybourne.kent.sch.uk](mailto:year1@leybourne.kent.sch.uk)  
[year3@leybourne.kent.sch.uk](mailto:year3@leybourne.kent.sch.uk)  
[year5@leybourne.kent.sch.uk](mailto:year5@leybourne.kent.sch.uk)

Teams can be accessed via smart phones, tablets, laptops and desktops, so we hope that all pupils will be able to engage in at least the live session each day. I appreciate that this situation is not without its challenges, and many families will struggle with access to the Internet and the availability of appropriate devices. If you think this will be a problem for you, please do contact me at [headteacher@leybourne.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@leybourne.kent.sch.uk) and we will do all we can to support you.

If your child is new to the school and you have not received the letters I refer to, I shall email you separately on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January to explain how to access the remote learning and class emails.

Teachers will be providing a live daily lesson, the times of which were sent home last term. As they will be responsible for setting, delivering and providing feedback on remote learning, they cannot, unfortunately, be responsible for supervising children in school, or setting separate work for children who are in school. Therefore, pupils who come into school will access the online learning, supervised by teaching assistants. In order to maintain Covid-security, we will need to organize these children in 'bubbles' in class and at play and lunch times, and may need to ask them to work in a way which is appropriately socially distanced in order to minimize risk of infection while at school. *Please be aware that these lessons will begin on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January – we had already planned for Monday to be a staff development day.*

Decisions will be made as to the organisation of teaching groups when we have confirmed numbers of essential worker and vulnerable children. At this stage I anticipate keeping to our existing staggered arrival and departure times. Our catering company have confirmed that they will be offering packed lunches to children in school as during the previous lockdown, or parents can send their children into school with their own packed lunch from home. We are aware that families of children who are entitled to free school meals will be concerned. The voucher system which we used in the summer term is not currently operating, and so we will be issuing Tesco vouchers (£15 per week per child) to those families. Please note that this is only for children eligible for free school meals as part of the Pupil Premium provision – not the Universal Infant Free School Meals which all children in Reception to Year 2 are entitled to.

During the last period of school closure, we were able to change children's school reading books. I am sorry to say that we will not be doing this during this closure. We would ask that children read books they have at home for the next two weeks, and we will review this should the school remain closed beyond 18<sup>th</sup> January. Thank you.

The planned additional Zoom meeting for prospective Reception parents (September 2021) will take place as arranged at 7pm on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January. If you would like to join this meeting, please do email me at [headteacher@leybourne.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@leybourne.kent.sch.uk) and I shall be happy to send you an invitation.

I am so sorry that 2021 will begin in this way, it really is not what any of us wanted for our children. I am all too aware of the inconvenience this is likely to cause for many families. However, we will do all we can to keep children learning and progressing during

this period and will be available to answer any questions you may have. At this time, we must plan for this situation to last for two weeks, with a proposed return to school for all pupils on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021. I will obviously keep you informed of any changes as and when they occur – I am afraid you are likely to hear much more from me over the coming weeks and months than you would probably like!

In the meantime, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year. I hope it brings health, happiness and a return to some kind of normality to us all.

With my very best wishes,

Tina Holditch  
Headteacher

### **Essential Worker Booking Form**

**Weeks beginning Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

Name(s) of child / children: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Essential worker roles of parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick the days your role as an essential worker mean your child(ren) will be in school:

Monday January	4 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday January	5 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> January	Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> January	Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> January
Staff Development Day						

Monday January	11 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday January	12 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> January	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> January	Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> January

Please return this form to [headteacher@leybourne.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@leybourne.kent.sch.uk) by the end of Friday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021. Thank you.