



Dear parents and carers,

As we move forward in continuing to prepare our **potential** school return to more children, I need to write to everyone in our school community to continue to ask for support in managing how we will open to more children **SHOULD** we be allowed.

Currently, we continue to open to **key worker** children whose parents are **critical** to the Covid-19 Response **and vulnerable** children. We are now providing this care for up to 50 children altogether. It is the provision of this care that I really need to ask for support from everyone in our school community as we continue to plan for further reopening. Please see the below link for a reminder of the government guidance on Key worker provision:

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

Whilst I have previously highlighted that within this guidance the Government now encourages children to attend, it also states that parents may be able look after their children at home. Indeed, for people accessing this service, the situation for you may have changed recently and care is not needed every day now. This could be due to a variety of reasons including days off now falling in the week and shift patterns. Whilst we have supported everyone requesting care over the last 11 weeks, it has now become apparent that a **re-evaluation** of this provision has now become crucial.

Why do we need to consider key worker provision?

In considering opening to **more children** the guidance has always prioritised groups returning to school in the following order;

- 1. Key worker and vulnerable care for children**
- 2. Reception**
- 3. Year 1**
- 4. Year 6**

We have always been aware of this order of priority. However, based on our information at the time and working with our key worker families over the **9 weeks** prior to developing our plan, we always felt we had capacity to bring **ALL** groups back.

At the beginning of school closure, we asked all parents to inform us if they qualified for this provision. We have successfully run this care for all families who have required it over the last **11 weeks**. Based on this evidence of requested places and how we have closely worked with families in school for **9 weeks**, we allocated all those who felt they met the required criteria a place moving forward. We have always felt this was the most supportive thing to do.

Alongside the return of Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, we therefore allocated **30 places for potential key workers and vulnerable children**. At the time of the plan, this provision also allowed us some scope of adding in additional children on any given day. Altogether, this filled our maximum capacity of 120 places for children in school.

Our **original** planning indicated the following:

Group	Planned allocation based on evidence (in 8 pods of up to 15 each)	Original Uptake
Key Care worker and vulnerable children provision in Year 2,3,4 and 5	30	23
Reception	30	22
Year 1	30	21
Year 6	30	23
Total	120	89

Our planning meant we felt able to allocate everyone who felt they required a place provision and welcome back the youngest children in school and our 6 children to prepare them for a crucial step in their live as they move onto Highschool.

What is the situation now?

Current requests for key worker care are now exceeding 40 for Years 2, 3, 4 and 5. If we need to increase our **key workers and vulnerable children care capacity** based on **current** and **future** applications beyond the **30 per day** we had in place for year 2, 3, 4 and 5, we will then need to review and **decrease** the year groups who may be invited back to school when Lancashire County Council advise it is right to do so. Under government guidance, priority to return to school after **Key worker children** will be given to **Reception** then **Year 1** and finally **Year 6**. If demand for key workers increases, **we will need** to make an adjustment.

Whilst I understand that people classed as **key workers** are now encouraged to send children back and your position can change, I would like to highlight the Government guidance highlighted above continues to state '**crucial to the covid-19 response**' as you now consider your request for a place and also **if** that place is required **every day**. It may also be the case that people **working at home are not in need of this provision**. In addition, the government has also highlighted how employers should work with employees who cannot access child care at this time. Finally, it is important to remind everyone that key worker provision **does still not equate to normal school** for those children.

What does this mean?

As numbers of requests continue to rise daily for **Key worker provision**, it will be very difficult for school to invite back all of the year groups given priority by the Government this term and highlighted within our published plan. In order to re-evaluate and once again confirm our plan for the return of more children we need to be **sure** of **accurate** numbers by **Monday 8th June** at 12pm. Even if you have been accessing this provision you will now need to inform us of your requirements as they may have changed.

I hope everyone understands that the **current DFE restrictions placed on school** mean that we **cannot** currently welcome back more than **120 children** in total to our school setting. Any increase of this **key worker** group for Year 2, 3, 4 and 5 beyond 30 places a day **may mean** that **Year 6** cannot return to school for the final weeks of their Primary School life to take part in transition to high school. I fully understand that this situation will cause concern for all of **Year 6 children and their families** but once again these are unprecedented times and often means we are working with very strict restrictions.

I would like to **reiterate** that our original planning accounted for emergency care of children of **key workers** that we **were made aware of**. The current consistent change in requests for this care is now increasingly difficult to manage within our plans and procedures to welcome back more children. We are sometimes not receiving requests until the evening before or in some cases not at all. Whilst I have been supportive of every situation I hope everyone understands that this new fluctuation makes it impossible to plan with certainty for the coming weeks.

What do I need to do now?

Please consider if your request is **critical to the COVID 19** response. If you feel it is, consider the days you **need** emergency care. Then please email your request for key worker and emergency care for the **rest of term** if you feel meet the criteria. This request is from the week beginning **Monday 15th June** and should be emailed by Monday 8th June at 12pm. Please email your request for provision for at: bursar@aughtonchristchurch.lancs.sch.uk

If **we have not received a response** from you we may not be able to guarantee you a place at this provision.

As you will understand we will now have to strictly verify any details that you provide us with to ensure that you qualify for a place. Please state the following on your request:

Childs name:

Year Group:

Job title and position to ensure you are critical to covid-19 response:

Job sector - under Government guidance:

Employer details – name, contact number and position:

Days of care each week requested starting Monday 15th June (Eg. Monday, Wednesday):

I continue to understand and empathise with everyone at this time. These truly are challenging times and everyone is greatly impacted by the national situation. Having said this, I would gratefully ask all families to consider their request for **Emergency** care very carefully now. As we continue moving forward it is important to stress this element of our provision significantly impacts on school's capacity and will therefore impact on children in identified year groups returning as we work hard to welcome back more children.

I fully understand that for children in **Year 2, 3, 4 and 5** it is **equally challenging** not yet having a return to school plan. I can assure you that the staff and I also find this incredibly hard! We really do miss all of the children. I wish for nothing more than a time when I can welcome back every year group to the school building but this is currently just not possible due to Government guidance. What we wish to do is invite as many children back to school as possible as identified by the Government and outlined in our plan **when** the Lancashire County Council guidance allows.

Finally, I know my letter and communications to all may appear lengthy but I feel that we can only work **together** for **ALL** the children in our community if we all understand the whole context. I have endeavoured to ensure everyone has always had every piece of information to inform decision making and fully understand the situation. Managing the return to school for **more children** when we are advised is **not something school can do alone**.

Finally, I want everyone to understand that this situation continues to provide huge challenges for school and myself. It really is an incredibly difficult time and we are sincerely trying to balance many different things with the needs of **all of our children** at the forefront of our thoughts.

If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch. Thank you for your continued support.

Mr D Kennedy

Headteacher