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**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Dear Parents and Carers,

As you are aware, schools are closed to most pupils to help contain the spread of the virus in the community, but are open for children of critical workers, and vulnerable children.

Since the first lockdown, the criteria for these categories has changed quite significantly, and this means there is currently a high demand for places in schools.

While it is very important for you to send your child to school if you really need to, we are kindly asking for your help to bring this number down if you can.

The majority of school staff are well and able to work, but they are under a huge amount of pressure and are at capacity. This means there will be resourcing issues if anyone becomes ill, or if there is a need to self-isolate.

To help staff members, pupils and your families stay as safe as possible, please consider whether you are able to keep your child safely at home, instead of sending them to school, even if you are a key worker.

For example, if you are a critical worker can you still work effectively whilst your children are at home? If you have another adult in your household who can care for your child, could they be responsible for them? If you are not a full-time critical worker, could you keep your children at home on the days that you don't work?

Please note, under the national guidance (updated on 8 January), the government stated that children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school or college if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.

Remember, the new variant of the virus is highly transmissible, meaning it's easier to catch and easier to pass on. If more children can learn at home, where possible, it will help to bring down infection rates across the borough.

Thank you for your understanding.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sal Thirlway', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sal Thirlway

Assistant Director of Children's Services (Learning, Achievement and Partnership)