

03/01/2021

Dear Parent/Carer

You will be aware from recent reports in the media that there are a number of pressures currently affecting all schools with respect to the arrangements for the start of term in January. Notably, a number of the professional associations and unions that represent school staff have been raising concerns regarding the government's plans for reopening this term in light of increasing rates of COVID19 transmission in the community. For example, the National Education Union is invoking Section 44 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 to advise its members nationally that they can refuse to return to the workplace due to health and safety concerns.

As you would expect, the trust has a duty to ensure that staff and pupils attending its schools are able to do so as safely as possible, and to ensure that it meets its duties as an employer. Risk assessments need to take into account a number of factors ranging from the system of controls in place to reduce COVID19 transmission to the staffing resource element, i.e how many staff are able to attend to ensure that the needs of all pupils are safely met.

Having today reviewed the immediate pressures directly affecting Solent Infant School and Solent Junior School, the board of trustees has made the decision that the schools should move to providing remote learning at home for the majority of pupils with effect from 04 January 2020. This decision has been made on the grounds of safety for the overall school community. Pupils identified as vulnerable and the children of critical workers only can continue to attend the schools for on-site provision. This has not been an easy decision and trustees realise that it will cause upset and inconvenience for families. However, we trust that families will understand that the safeguarding and welfare of all members of our schools' communities must be prioritised.

This decision will be kept under review in the light of local and national changes and any updates communicated as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Hamilton

Ms S F Spivey

Chair of Trustees

Chief Executive Officer