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4th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

As you will be aware, more schools have now decided to close. Victoria Academies Trust is continuing to follow government guidance by opening its schools where staffing allows; however, given the transmissibility of the new Covid variant, additional safety measures have today been added to risk assessments. These additional measures, while necessary, have implications for our school, our children and our working parents requiring before and after-school care.

Government guidance currently allows a degree of flexibility when creating and staffing bubbles for wrap-around care and in other situations such as creating intervention groups and covering statutory teacher PPA time.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#wraparound-provision-and-extra-curricular-activity>

However, given that schools are asked to remain open whilst transition rates continue to rise, Victoria Academies Trust schools have imposed more robust safety measures to mitigate against this greater risk. This essentially means that staff cannot now be used across school to provide:

- Before and after-school clubs (paid for wrap-around care)
- PPA cover for teachers
- Intervention or nurture groups unless children are taught in the group for the whole of their provision and remain with the same teacher (such as in Rainbow group).
- Sports/PE coaching

Lessons delivered by peripatetic teachers such as those delivering music lessons and other interventions such as speech and language therapy are also suspended. There will also be no visitors to school or face to face meetings between members of staff.

The implications of this are **with immediate effect** and are as follows:

- **No before and after school clubs (paid for wrap-around care)**
- No intervention groups
- If a teacher is ill or isolating, the class can only be covered by a member of the bubble (the allocated Higher Level Teaching Assistants or Teaching Assistants). If there are no bubble members left, the class will need to be taught remotely. Other NMPA teachers of supply teachers cannot be used.

I am extremely sorry that these changes will bring yet more last-minute disruption and stress to hard-working parents. However, as we are asked to open schools in the current situation we have to try to do this with as much risk mitigation as we can.

The Prime Minister is giving a national address at 8.00pm this evening and parliament has been recalled tomorrow. This could potentially be to bring in a full national lock-down which may close our school to all but vulnerable and critical worker children.

Should this be the case, I will update you with further information. In the meantime, thank you for your continued patience and support. This is certainly not an easy situation for anyone.

Yours faithfully

Mrs S Pennington

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