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Dear Parents and carers,

### Critical Worker Provision

Having now had a few of days to evaluate our current situation, it is necessary for us to write to you with regards to our Critical Worker provision offer. We have been able to get a better idea of the number of Critical Worker children that are wanting to access the School's provision and in most classes the numbers are incredibly high. This week sees another rise in numbers from last week. To give you a context, during the last lockdown we provided places for between 2–5% of our children. Today we have 36% of our children in school and, in some classes, almost 50% of children. Some days this week, we have 40% of the school asking for a place in school. This has forced us to review who we can provide with a face-to-face place in school.

We are aware that only one parent requires keyworker status but if the other parent is able to provide care for their child at home, they should do so for the safety of all. We are also very aware of some parents sending their child in when there is a parent at home who could provide supervision. For us, this poses a huge dilemma and a problem in that this defeats the object of a lockdown as so many children are in school. As a consequence, all staff have to be in school, meaning that they are having close contact with each other and then, ultimately, your families. Government guidelines dictate that school should offer places to the children of Critical Workers, however, 'Parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can.'

For this reason, we are having to request evidence/confirmation that both parents are working and are unable to have their child at home. If you have already sent us evidence of Critical Worker status this week for both parents (or in the case of single parent families for the main carer) you do not need to send it again. However, we are requesting that all other parents, who wish for their child to have a Critical Worker place, and who have not sent evidence this week, to do so as soon as possible (eg a current letter from your employer) to: [office@dunswellacademy.co.uk](mailto:office@dunswellacademy.co.uk). Please note that this also applies to those parents who were previously recorded with us as Critical Workers back in March 2020. If the non-critical worker parent is also unable to home school their child(ren) because of work commitments, we need clarification of this also to: [office@dunswellacademy.co.uk](mailto:office@dunswellacademy.co.uk) as soon as possible. Once we have received your evidence/clarification, if we are not satisfied that you are unable to keep your child at home, we will be advising you that your child cannot take up a Critical Worker place in school. This needs to be sent please by Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January at the latest. If nothing is received by this date, a place at school cannot be offered.

On Friday, we received updated guidance from the Local Authority which advised us that we must ensure numbers in school are as low as possible. They have also shared with us a tier system which we should use in school should the numbers not significantly reduce after sending this letter. If numbers for next week's

requirements are as high as this week, we will be strictly following the tier system. For information, the tier system suggested by the Local Authority is as follows:

1. Vulnerable children identified as those with an assigned social worker or an EHCP.
2. Other vulnerable categories identified in 'Guidance - Children of critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings' (5/01/21), with the exception of those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home. Please contact Kay Ray [kay.ray@eastriding.gov.uk](mailto:kay.ray@eastriding.gov.uk) for support on remote learning.
3. Pupils with 2 parents whose occupations are critical to the CoVid pandemic response or EU transition, or 1 parent in a single parent family.
4. Pupils with 1 parent whose occupations are critical to the CoVid pandemic response or EU transition.

In view of the above, we would please urge you to think carefully about whether you need to send your child into school. At the moment, children who are working from home are being set an online or recorded curriculum with check-in sessions, whilst the children in school are receiving the same curriculum and are being supervised by our support staff. If you have requested a place for your child already next week and you do not meet the criteria then please advise us that you no longer require the space by emailing the school office.

We understand how obtrusive this might seem, but we find ourselves in a very difficult situation, which is proving a challenge to manage. It is absolutely not within our nature to want to tell a child they cannot attend school, but it is felt that a small minority of parents are abusing the system and using the school even on days when they could have their children at home. We are therefore left with no option but to have to ask. We are trying our best to support families within our community, whilst also trying to support the nation's efforts to arrest the further spread of this virus. The sooner it is under control, the sooner we will have all our children back in school. Thank you for your continued support now and in the future.

Yours sincerely



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