



# THE WILLINK SCHOOL

Head Teacher: Mr P Fry MA Deputy Head: Mr A Sizer MA Assistant Deputy Head: Mrs N Browning BA

10<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents & Carers

## Early school closure for Christmas 2020

I am writing to let you know that, following advice from the Department of Education (DfE) issued to schools yesterday, the final day of teaching at The Willink prior to the Christmas break will be Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December. On Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December the school will be closed, however we shall follow our usual end of term schedule, but with lessons and assemblies will be conducted remotely.

This change has been brought about to support the health and wellbeing of the staff. Mr Gibb, Secretary of State for Education yesterday said "We want to make sure that they (school staff) can have a proper break over Christmas. We know they've been under huge stress."

The DfE has agreed with Public Health England, a six-day window after the final day of teaching, in which schools are asked to remain contactable so they can assist with contact tracing. This will allow enough time for positive coronavirus (COVID-19) cases to be identified and confirmed by a test and for relevant contacts in the education setting to be traced.

To confirm, where a student or staff member tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school, the school should not be contacted. Parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace. For the first six days after teaching ends (Friday 18<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December) if a student or staff member tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms within 48 hours of being in school, the school is asked to assist in identifying close contacts and advising self-isolation, as the individual may have been infectious whilst in school. Please be aware that if Willink has a positive test for coronavirus (COVID-19), families may be contacted and will be asked to self-isolate.

The advice received from HM Government is not to hold a remote learning day, but rather hold an Inset (In-service Training) day. We are unable to do this, however, as we are committed to schedule this on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April and bringing this forward does not provide the time when we shall need it. Keeping the 18<sup>th</sup> December as originally planned, of course, runs contrary to the six-day window. We are also aware that the school would have substantial staff absence as those with children of their own will have their own child care issues. We shall therefore be undertaking a Remote Learning Day on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December. This will include three lessons and a festive end of term assembly for each year group. More details will be sent to parents and carers next week.

May I apologise for this late notice in the change of end of term date.

Yours sincerely

Peter Fry, Head