

Dear parents/carers

Following the announcement of the third national lockdown on 4 January, City of York Council has been working with the city's schools to ensure that they are able to provide a vital service for critical workers and vulnerable children in the city whilst continuing to operate safely.

At a time when the rates of infection both nationally and locally are rising it is very important that we work together to protect frontline services. At the same time we need to continue to prevent the spread of the virus by keeping the number of household contacts to a minimum.

Last week, the Government followed up its initial guidance on who qualifies as a critical worker. The Government is now asking parents and carers who are critical workers to keep their children at home if possible and only use a school place if they have no other options available.

If you qualify as a critical worker but can manage to have your children at home we would urge you to do so. The fewer children we have in schools, the more it will help in our collective efforts to stop the spread of the virus.

Our schools have risk assessments in place which allow them to work safely and to minimise the risk of transmission of Covid19. For this to work as effectively as possible schools need to have the capacity to support home learning as well as having sufficient staff to supervise children on site. For these reasons they need to keep the numbers in school at a safe level.

We appreciate that this is a difficult time for parents and carers. We know that this situation is causing considerable disruption to your personal and working lives. Schools are also working extremely hard to ensure that places are available for frontline workers and for vulnerable children.

We would also, like you, much prefer to have children in school. However, in order to reduce the rates of infection, and following the latest Government advice, we would ask you to think carefully about your individual circumstances, particularly if you or your partner is able to work from home. If you can, it would be really helpful for the safe management of our schools and the suppression of the virus if you could make arrangements to keep your child at home. Where this proves impossible then we will work with parents and carers to find access to provision.

To help support families during the coronavirus pandemic, our educational psychology team has created a booklet with information about how parents can look after their own emotional health, and support their children, which you may find useful www.york.gov.uk/downloads/LAYLAYC

You can also keep up to date with the latest information about the coronavirus response in York:

- visit www.york.gov.uk/coronavirus
- talk to your ward councillor
- follow our social media channels: Twitter: [@CityofYork](https://twitter.com/CityofYork) or [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/cityofyork)
- register for a regular email update: www.york.gov.uk/form/EmailUpdates

We are incredibly grateful for all you have done already and on behalf of the city, thank you for all you are doing to reduce the spread of the virus.

Stay safe and best wishes



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