

Durham County Council

Horden Nursery School
Cotsford Park
Horden
PETERLEE
Co. Durham
SR8 4TB



Headteacher- Natalie Parkinson
School No. 1035
Tel: 0191 5865415

Dear Parents and carers,

Thank you once again for your continued support for our nursery school throughout this very difficult period of time.

I communicated with you all on Monday 4th January, to share with you the decision reached by the full Governing Body to close the school to all but key workers and vulnerable children, for a two-week period.

The Governing Body and I continue to monitor the health and wellbeing of the entire school community and are looking on a daily basis at the local rate of cases; the new information from SAGE (Scientific Advisory Group Emergencies) and the DfE (Department for Education).

Thank you for respecting our decision and supporting the school by keeping your children at home to stay safe.

We have over 120 children who attend nursery and are supported by 20 staff. This would mean a large number of different households all mixing together.

We know many of our parents are in full time and part time employment, often relying upon grandparents who drop off and collect children from nursery. This adds to the household mixing, potentially placing further members of the community at risk.

The local infection rate around our school area has increased sharply over the past week and figures taken from the Durham County Council Covid Surveillance Dashboard, state that there are now 829.7 cases per 100,000, compared to the County Durham rate of 466 cases per 100,000. There has been a 242.9% increase in cases over the last 7 days. The number of cases are also similar or higher in surrounding areas.

We understand the DfE have made the decision for early years settings to remain open. However, schools have been asked to close. As a school for early years children, we find ourselves in a difficult position. Over the last 2 weeks, nursery has been fully staffed and open, to a reduced number of children who fall within the key worker and vulnerable category. Within this period, we have had a confirmed case of coronavirus and currently have a number of children and staff isolating.

As a school, taking in to consideration the figures for our current local infection rate, we have taken the decision to continue to only open the school to a reduced number of children, giving priority to the children of key workers and those classed as vulnerable. This will be for a period of 2 weeks and we will continue to review the situation and infection rates throughout this time. Staff will continue to provide home learning ideas, activities and videos through our Class Dojo.

We recognise our nursery school provides a vital service for you and your children. We understand that all of our family's situations are unique and although we believe the safest place for your child is at home, we want to be able to support our families who have no other solution than to send their child to school. We will be contacting all parents by phone at the beginning of next week, to catch up and discuss any individual circumstances we can help with.

As Head Teacher of our wonderful school, I have a duty of care to support you all through this lockdown. We are all feeling the immense strain of following government guidelines, rules and advice; for a third time and feel we must all work together, as a community to support one another and keep everyone safe. Please be assured that the safety and wellbeing of our children, families, staff and the community are at the heart of any decisions that are made.

Yours Faithfully

Natalie Parkinson and the Nursery Team