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Sunday 3rd January 2021

Dear Parents/carers,

Return to School Arrangements – Sunday 3rd January UPDATE

Apologies for another letter so soon after the last but, as you will realise, a lot has happened in the last couple of days. Can I start by wishing you a happy New Year – I think we are all hoping it will be an improvement on 2020!

The news in the last few days, with infection rates rising, has been a concern for us all and, as far as I understand it, the new variant is far more transmissible than was previously the case. What that means in schools is very difficult to judge at this time. All we can do is continue the measures we have had in place throughout the last term and try to reduce the risks as much as we can.

You will have seen that several school professional associations & trade unions are giving advice to their members, which makes planning for the next few days also very difficult. As I write this we intend to open the school tomorrow, as planned, but the situation is rapidly changing. We do have some members of staff who we know will be off, due to the covid-related issues over the holidays, as well as some pupils also in this situation.

Since my letter on 31st December, we have had quite a few emails from parents asking what will happen if they decide to not to bring their child in school this week. I want to reassure parents that I totally understand and sympathise with their concerns. As I said in the first letter we would like to reassure parents that whatever decisions they make to protect their family at this uncertain time will be fully supported by the school. We will not be sending out absence letters/issuing fines for the next couple of weeks. Please email the school office on adminoffice@portway-jun.co.uk if your child will not be in school.

If pupils are working from home then we will do our best to support them as best we can and we will discuss this with staff this week. We have already in place our emergency 2 days plans on our website for the start of the week. Please follow the link on the front page and select the appropriate year group.

Next week we will reduce groups, etc. to limit the infection and this may affect some pupils, particularly those on the SEN register. Mrs Norton (SENco) will be contact with those parents during the week to explain any changes.

If there any more important updates then I will send out a further letter.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Mr Deery".

Mr Deery
Headteacher