

## All Saints CEVA Primary School & Nursery Unit

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**Headteacher:** Mrs Emma Johnson

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### Further update re start of Spring term 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

I apologise that I am writing to you at such short notice, given that the start of the new school term is tomorrow. I also apologise that I am currently unable to give the certainty of a definitive plan for tomorrow and the coming week. However I think it is important to openly share the current situation with you.

**At this moment we will be open tomorrow as normal. The All Saints on the northants website is the Northampton one.**

On Wednesday 30 December the **government** announced that primary schools in some Tier 4 areas would be instructed to undertake online learning with their children for the first two weeks of this term. These areas, were identified within the **DfE's (Department for Education)** "Contingency Framework" and included some London boroughs and some surrounding counties but not Hampshire.

On Friday the 1<sup>st</sup> January, the **DfE** updated their guidance, following health concerns raised by some local councils, to include all London boroughs. The latest version of the "Contingency Framework" can be viewed here:

[DfE Contingency Framework](#)

On Saturday the 2<sup>nd</sup> January a number of leadership and teacher **Unions** shared their concerns with both the government and their members and questioned why primary schools in some Tier 4 areas were being instructed to undertake at least two weeks of remote learning and others were being instructed to start in person learning from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January. You can read their views and comments with these links:

[NAHT \(National Association of Headteachers\)](#)

[NEU \(National Education Union\)](#)

[NASUWT](#)

The **government** recognise that:

*"Evidence shows the new strain of COVID-19 is increasing across the country. The majority of the cases identified in London, the South East and the East of England are of the new variant. Infection rates have increased faster than expected in these areas where the new strain has been circulating and stronger measures are required to get the virus under control."* (DfE Contingency Framework)

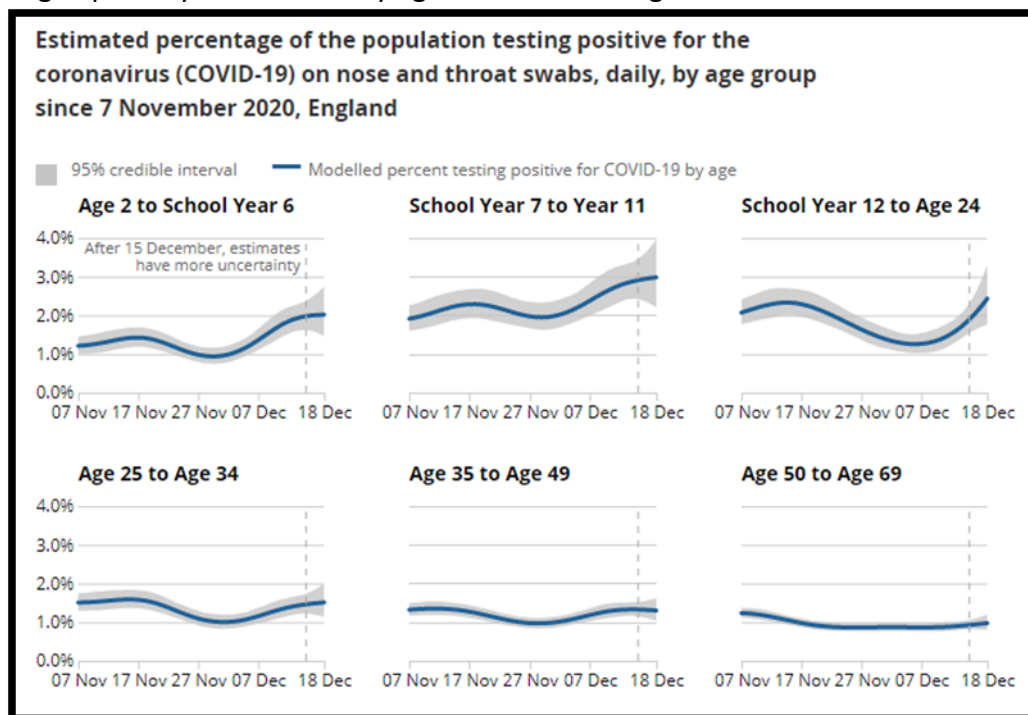
The minutes from a **SAGE** meeting on 22 December 2020 which informs the government's decision making stated:

*"It is highly unlikely that measures with stringency and adherence in line with the measures in England in November (i.e. with schools open) would be sufficient to maintain  $R$  below 1 in the presence of the new variant.  $R$  would be lower with schools closed."*

The minutes from this meeting can be viewed here:

[SAGE meeting 22.12.2020](#)

The **Office for National Statistics** shared data that shows that rates of Covid-19 positive cases were rising in primary and secondary aged children during December:



[ONS Covid-19 survey 24.12.2020](#)

I am sharing this information to be open with you as families about the position schools and school leaders are in at this time with regards important decisions. I will continue to monitor the national and Northamptonshire guidance and updates throughout, and have met with staff this morning to discuss our plans.

All children should be back in class full time. Staff at All Saints could have decided in accordance with their union not to attend school in person due to health and safety concerns. This is their legal right as employees if they choose to do so, and a decision which if they make will have my

full understanding and support. At this current time no member of staff has requested this if this was to be the case this would lead to a situation where some classes might be in school learning in person and some classes learning remotely at home. *For clarification both the DfE and the Unions are only proposing this initially for the first two weeks of term. Also during this time I would show the same full understanding and support for any families who choose to keep their children home for remote learning during this same time period.*

Myself and the staff at All Saints support the DfE's view that consistency of learning is important for children, and we recognise that the relationships and routines associated with schools support children's wellbeing.

Any potential changes to our plans are not linked to unsafe practices at All Saints, both staff and parents view the actions we have taken as a school to minimise the risk of Covid transmission as effective. Concerns being raised are due to the rise in numbers of positive cases both locally and nationally.

I can assure you we will continue to work carefully and to keep reviewing our procedures throughout 2021, to make the safety of everyone in our community our first priority.

This may involve more staff wearing visors and/or masks in classrooms or us requesting that children in the older classes wear masks when moving around inside the school. Any changes that we undertake will be communicated to you in as timely a manner as possible.

I look forward to welcoming you back tomorrow. Please be aware that this situation may change over the coming days / weeks due to changes in local or national guidance, or due to cases impacting staffing. However, I would reassure you that the staff team continue to confidently believe that as a school we have the right systems in place to maximise safety and minimise risk for members of our community on our school site.

Other points I would like to share with you are:

- If you, your child or another member of your family is showing Covid-19 symptoms please self isolate and book a test as per the national guidance.
- If you need to let us know that someone in your house has had a positive result from a Covid19 test please let us know
- As we have to keep windows open in classrooms to provide ventilation, please make sure your child is wearing extra layers during this half-term.
- After school Tutoring sessions will not take place during this week as planned.
- I request that you observe social distancing at the drop off and pick up times and wear a face covering.
- I will be sending a google form tomorrow for you to update our information regarding critical worker and vulnerable children so we can start to plan numbers if we are to close in the future.

In conclusion, I have not written to cause further worry or concern, but to be open with you all about the current situation and to forewarn families that despite everyone's best efforts there may be periods of remote learning ahead of us during this term. I appreciate that this letter may

have raised more questions for you and your child, but please be assured we will do everything we can to safeguard the health of your child and every member of the school community, and to communicate in as clearly and timely a manner as possible.

I will update you all tomorrow with the next steps following the announcement from Boris Johnson tonight.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Emma Johnson in black ink.Handwritten signature of Sam Barber in black ink, set against a light blue rectangular background.

Emma Johnson Headteacher    Sam Barber Chair of Governors