

10 December

Dear Parent or Carer,

Re: Basildon Primary School teaching arrangements

We are writing to you to provide an update following recent discussions involving your child's Head Teacher about schools in the Basildon area, particularly given recent news in the local press.

As you may already be aware, Public Health officials have confirmed that the whole Basildon district is currently seeing unprecedented levels of Covid cases, not being seen elsewhere across the county and it is therefore vital that we take urgent action, based on what the local data is telling us, to manage this as quickly and effectively as we can.

As a result and given the specific age group seeing an exceptionally high rate of cases at present, we have advised secondary schools in Basildon that they have the option to move to a fully remote online learning offer from Monday 14 December.

This is something that has been offered purely from a Public Health perspective, to prevent further spread of the virus and we are very clear that secondary schools do not have to take up this offer. We will continue to support all schools as we have done regardless of what they decide.

We are aware of the calls for the blanket closure of all schools in Basildon, however this is not an approach we are also supporting in respect of primary schools in the area. This is because the rate of transmission in Basildon primary schools is lower than in secondaries and therefore from a Public Health perspective this action is not justified at this time.

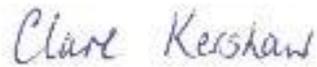
Instead we are continuing to work flexibly with primary schools in the district on an individual basis, to look at their specific situation and make fully informed decisions based on what the data tells us. We do acknowledge that there are some primary schools that are seeing higher rates than others, but again, this is being dealt with on a case by case basis to ensure that these are carefully managed.

It is vital that we take a proportionate response in respect of Basildon primary schools and that we consider not only the impact of any decisions on pupils, but also our parent communities and particularly those parents who work during school hours.

If, based on the appropriate insight, specific schools are required to move all pupils to remote learning at any point, this will be a collaborative decision between the school, the local Test and Trace service and the Local Authority, and clearly

communicated with you.

We appreciate this has been a very difficult year for pupils, their families and school colleagues and we'd like to thank you for your continued support.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clare Kershaw".

Clare Kershaw

Director of Education
Essex County Council

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dr Mike Gogarty".

Dr Mike Gogarty

Director of Public Health
Essex County Council