



We will remain open as planned for all pupils on the 18th December 2020

You may have already seen the headlines about schools being closed on Friday 18th December. This information arrived with us after school yesterday and included information which was completely new to us. We realise that this is very short notice for notifying of an INSET day and then subsequent change to dates during the year and have therefore decided to keep school open on the 18th of December.

This is the information we received yesterday:

To ensure that staff get the time off they need and deserve, schools may wish to use an INSET day, making Friday 18 December a non-teaching day and using the day for staff training, which could be delivered online. Where term would normally finish in the week commencing 21 December, schools may wish to consider adjusting term dates to make Friday 18 December the last day of term (which could be an INSET day), and bringing forward the start of term in January by the same number of days. In all circumstances, teaching time must be made up at another point in the academic year. You should not limit attendance at school before Friday 18 December. It remains vital for all children to be in school up to the last day of teaching.

The schools within the Belper cluster have had a lengthy discussion this morning and the Primary Schools have agreed that we will all continue with our original plan to **keep schools open on the 18th of December**. Belper School have a slightly different plan in place but it was agreed at the meeting that the needs of the older children differed from the younger children, especially where childcare is concerned.

Within the information sent yesterday, it was also outlined that schools would have to track and trace for 6 days after term finished. The government has reminded schools that remaining open until the 18th December, staff would have to continue to track and trace until December 24th. Until yesterday, staff were not even aware they would have to track and trace for 6 days after term so they really aren't giving staff the time off after all!

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This is the information sent:

We recommend all schools ensure staff, parents and carers are aware of the following information and relevant arrangements regarding positive cases in the holidays:

Where a pupil or staff member tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school, the school should not be contacted. Parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.

For the first 6 days after teaching ends, if a pupil or staff member tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms within 48 hours of being in school, the school is asked to assist in identifying close contacts and advising self-isolation, as the individual may have been infectious whilst in school.

School staff are not asked to remain on-call or conduct any contact tracing more than 6 days after the final day of teaching. Where a schools last teaching day is on Thursday 17 December, there should be no pupil contact tracing asks beyond Wednesday 23 December.

Where pupils are required to self-isolate due to contact with a positive case after the first 6 days following the end of term, schools do not need to be informed about their absence until the first day of the new term.

If your child has any symptoms on Saturday 19th December or Sunday 20th December and then tests positive for COVID, please use the link below to inform school and we will take the appropriate action to inform the rest of the school community.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=Qun-OnEauEKIoh-krAkHYHQLnL8kbt5HtyS6x99oLE1UNVZRS1VZMTNPNOFDSDNTWDhKTUJaRldJVS4u>

We continue to be vigilant in our efforts to try and keep children and the community safe during this time and minimise the spread. If you or your child have COVID symptoms during the last few days of term please let school know immediately so we can take appropriate action and try and protect everyone's Christmas.

If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to ring the school office on 01773823383 or email lnicholson2@pottery.derbyshire.sch.uk

Very many thanks for your continued support and very many apologies if this has caused as much confusion and stress as it has caused at school.

I'll get back in touch with the big red man in the North Pole and get him to rearrange his flight to Pottery back to the 18th after all, just in case he was also sent the information from the government!

I am sure I will write again before Christmas but in case I don't, have a very safe and happy Christmas.

Mrs Nicholson
Acting Headteacher

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