

Barley Lane School

Friendship, Optimism, Hardwork

31st January 2021

Dear All (parents and carers and colleagues, governors and supporting professionals is so cumbersome),

As shared with you last week the demand for more schooling is still growing and we are working creatively and pragmatically to accommodate everyone but we are reaching a point now where the increase and demand cannot be matched because we have no staffing capacity left.

I want to share and explain this a bit more with a few examples of why there are limits on what we can offer and achieve; they are familiar to you but I hope by being accountable to you and explaining my decisions (the buck does stop with me) I can offer you the honesty and so respect that will keep us trusting and supporting each other as we must to navigate these troubling and difficult times together

- Long term staffing losses are just that long term and we have lost some of our very best staff and I cannot replace them.
- Some classrooms are large and well ventilated and have younger children and younger staff too and so far less risky than older children and older staff in smaller and less-well ventilated rooms.
- Some of our children are much more at risk than others and we must keep them safe and that can take more staff capacity to achieve.
- Some vulnerable pupil behaviours create risks that demand greater staffing whether in school or through mentoring and support off-site.
- No special school I know of is offering full time schooling to all its “vulnerable” children and as shared last week our overall attendance is around 55% and that compares with 30% nationally in special schools and 59% in Devon.

Please be reassured every request is seriously considered and creative solutions looked for and any unexpected capacity redistributed and nothing is wasted but equally new risks and demands also emerge but either way every day and led by Mr Jones every bit of capacity we have got is used.

Meanwhile that dialogue and conversation between you and the teachers and support staff is so, so important in understanding each other and the decisions made and keeping us united.

Michael

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