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Dear parents and carers,

Since the Prime Minister's announcement earlier this week the country is now in **National lockdown: stay at home**. The Government's Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, made a statement yesterday and said that closing schools was not a decision that the Government wanted to take, however we have to support the national effort to slow the increase in coronavirus cases, prevent the NHS from being overwhelmed and save lives;

"schools have not suddenly become unsafe, but **limiting the number of people who attend them is essential** when the COVID rates are climbing as they are now".

All primary and secondary schools will be closed until at least 22 February, except for children who are deemed vulnerable and those with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker - that is, "parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus and EU transition response".

Schools are legally required, and want, to provide high quality remote education for all children and young people to ensure they continue to make progress whilst not able to be in school.

Since the first lockdown all schools in the Cabot Learning Federation have followed three key principles: make sure our children and young people are safe, fed and learning.

We will aim to offer places at school for the children who are eligible, following the Government's guidance and where this is safely possible. We hope to be able to meet the requests of critical worker parents for their children to attend school. There is a maximum number of children that we can safely have in groups and classrooms and also help limit contacts and reduce transmission of the coronavirus. For those of you with children in school, we will reconfirm on a weekly basis (on a Friday) their space for the following week. This will enable us to respond flexibly to local infection rates.

The expectations for remote learning are much higher now than in March last year when we went into the first lockdown and we are much better prepared to deliver learning online or at a distance. At Summerhill, we are endeavouring to do this through live learning and our WordPress sites. Thank you for bearing with us whilst we get this set up – I'm sure you can appreciate the challenges we are facing with the multitude of media devices and access issues there are when working with so many households. We appreciate your patience whilst we get this right. We know how challenging it is for parents to supervise and support home learning and want to thank you for your brilliant and ongoing efforts.

The aims and efforts to limit attendance in school now whilst we are in National lockdown will help us to get to a position where we can gradually return and then all schools fully open again and hopefully reduce future disruption to education.

Thank you for your support at this difficult time. Thank you for entrusting us with your children on site, and for supporting us with their learning at home – we really appreciate it.

Best wishes,

Kate Richardson
Executive Principal.