

**Councillor Gordon Watson – Cabinet Member Children & Young People's Services and Neighbourhoods**

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Councillor Gordon Watson

Councillor Carter

26th January 2021

By email [adam.carter@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:adam.carter@rotherham.gov.uk)

Dear Councillor Carter

**Council Meeting – 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

During the above meeting you asked a number of supplementary questions relating to schools' responses to Covid-19 which I agreed to follow up in writing.

**How many students are taking up offer to go into schools?**

Across this national lockdown the indication is that we are seeing increased attendance across a number of student groups in comparison to the first national lockdown in March 2020, to support your query I have sought to give you a breakdown across a number of cohort groups.

- The overall attendance across Rotherham education settings is circa 18% of the whole cohort in school, this primary phase attendance level is on average 25%, Secondary phase ranging between 6-8%, Special School are seeing circa 45% attendance levels and Pupil Referral units 40% - 45% attendance levels.
- Attendance across identified critical worker groups and those identified as vulnerable groups is outlined, circa 50% of children and young people with a social worker are in attendance in school, circa 45% of students that are eligible to attend because they have an Education, Health and Care Plan are in attendance in school, 15% of the Free School Meals student cohort is in attendance and 70-75% of eligible children of critical worker children are accessing the school place made available to them.

**What is the councils view on how schools are responding and are they doing normal learning in school?**

The evidence base garnered from work across the school system is that all schools have taken supportive steps to make sure the legal entitlement to remote learning is in place for all students, Schools continue to adapt to the challenges of a mixed economy of delivering in school and remote learning. This is a challenge, but from the continued work between the council and schools we are working collectively to mitigate any challenges or escalate key issues to the DfE.

**When can we expect all these children who need tech support to take delivery to allow them to be able to access education?**

- The DfE has confirmed that all primary and secondary schools can now access their updated allocation of digital devices including laptops, tablets and Wi-Fi dongles. Orders and deliveries from this scheme have been processed. The indications from schools is that the supply chain from this scheme has improved and schools are taking delivery of devices. Infant schools which sit outside this DfE scheme have raised concern around the ability of their cohort of students to benefit from this project and the council in partnership with other regional Local Authorities have escalated this within the DfE.
- Localised solutions to the digital poverty challenges which sit across this pandemic are also in motion and a number of local businesses are working closely with the council and partner organisations to provide further IT solutions to children who are remote learning from school. This community led approach is aiming to support schools in the short term to have a further allocation of Laptops for all school so students can benefit and we are extremely grateful in Rotherham for this support from local business leaders.

I hope above information adequately answers your question.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Gordon Watson

**Cabinet Member Children & Young People's Services and Neighbourhoods**