



20th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

As you know we act in accordance with the guidance from the Government and Public Health England. As we heard yesterday we are to **close from Friday at the end of the school day and remain closed until further notice – expect for the children of key workers, vulnerable children and children with an Education Health Care Plan.**

Current government guidance regarding eligibility for the school care as of Monday 23rd March 2020 is that children with at least one parent or carer who are identified as critical workers by the government can **potentially** send their children to school if required. **However, we must emphasise that the government guidance also states that “many parents working in these critical sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.”**

The list of Key Workers (or Critical Workers) has now been released by the Government and includes the following categories:

- Health and Social Care (includes doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care worker and other frontline health and social care staff.
- Education and Childcare (nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who must remain active during the COVID-19 response to deliver this approach.
- Key Public Services (includes those essential to the running of the justice system, religious staff, charities, those responsible for the management of the deceased etc.
- Local and National Government
- Food and other necessary goods
- Public safety and national security
- Transport
- Utilities, communication and financial services.

Please check the website for full information regarding which roles in each category are eligible <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>.

We have had many parents informing us that they are key workers and require a place for their child during our school closure. Please be advised we will only be able to offer places to vulnerable children and children of key workers based upon our capacity to do so safely. We will need to take account of both: a) the latest government scientific advice on the proportion of pupils that it is advisable to maintain direct support for in order to maintain efforts to delay the spread of the virus. This has been set as a maximum of 20% of the school population; and b) the number of staff available to work. This may require us to prioritise which pupils receive an offer, according to greatest need and we will have to manage which pupils can access the offer.

Aspiring and Achieving



We will review the key worker information we receive from parents and carers and from next week, we will be asking you to give details of how you meet the key worker criteria. This information will only be used to enable us to prioritise places due to shortage of staff. The highest priority will be for vulnerable children and for families where both parents are keyworkers or where a sole parent is a key worker. We will require evidence of these roles in order for us to prioritise places. Where the other parent is not a key worker places may be offered where the other parent cannot work from home. We will do our best to accommodate children of key workers if we can and will liaise with the Local Authority to see if those children who are not able to accommodate can attend other schools.

The government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend. The purpose of closing schools is to reduce the spread of the virus. There is a danger, with the list of jobs being published, that this will be lost sight of. Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, said that 'the government was aiming to provide an education setting for 10% of the children who usually attend schools'.

Please consider that the virus is likely to become more prevalent in our local community and we need to keep numbers in school low to reduce the risk of the virus spreading. If it does spread, we will then have staff who will be self-isolating for one or two weeks and we may not be able to cover any child care in school at all. This will have an adverse effect on all our families where both parents are doctors or nurses who will then not be able to provide urgent care as there is nobody to look after their child.

Further details regarding opening and meal arrangements will be issued shortly.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs K Highcock
Principal