

20.03.2020

Dear Parent/Carer Re: **Coronavirus update**

I am writing to inform you, although most of you will be aware following our discussions today, that we have now been instructed by our government to close the school to certain children after this Friday until further notice. It is important to follow all government guidelines and be aware of social distancing and self-isolation procedures as they are updated;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancingand-for-vulnerable-people>

The fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect our more vulnerable individuals in our wider society.

As government states;

“...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...”

Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined on the government website. Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home; every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.

NASEN – National Association for Special Educational Needs

“It is not a ‘requirement’ that all children and young people with Education, Health and Care plans attend school during the period of closure. Section 1.10 of the information for families is clear that decisions should be made locally based on risk assessments of health and safeguarding. The guidance is now clear that some children will be safer at school (or in their usual educational setting) whilst others will be safer at home. Schools, LAs and colleges are advised to make this decision on a case-by-case basis.

The general principle is that children should be at home if it is safe for them to do so”

As advised by the government, we will do all we can to stay open for the children of key workers (e.g. NHS staff, police, others in frontline services and children with certain needs, as directed by government guidelines) and our most vulnerable. We

attempted to speak to you all today to clarify this with you. If you missed our call, then please ring us immediately.

All other children will need to stay at home, so we ask that you do not send your child into school from Monday onwards. It is imperative that you adhere to this request, as no child of a parent/carer, not recognised on the key worker list or classed as vulnerable will have access to school for any reason.

As you know, we are blessed with 5 acres of enclosed grassland, allotments and a forest school. For those parents who wish to use these facilities, we welcome you to do so. If you are interested in using these facilities, then please email me directly so we can discuss how this will need to work. Although walks, use of parks, general exercise is encouraged, we must ensure we follow clear social distancing guidelines.

As the virus continues to spread, the staffing levels within the school have become increasingly difficult to manage on a day by day basis. For the school to remain open for key worker families and those deemed most vulnerable, we have had to take difficult decisions to limit numbers on those families that have a civic duty to the COVID-19 response.

For our school community (which will be the vast majority that are in isolation at home) we have created a list of websites that can be accessed; you will also receive a home-learning pack with a variety of practical and educational activities.

For any families who are in receipt of free school meals, we will be delivering a packed lunch directly to your door – this will be discussed with you directly on the phone.

We appreciate your continued patience as we deal with this ever-changing situation. We understand that this latest news will have an impact on you and your family; we will continue to keep in touch with any updates as the situation develops. The most important part of this ongoing situation is to keep yourselves and your families safe; so please do take care!

I cannot reiterate enough for every family to do their national and civic duty. We need to adhere to this advice for children to stay at home to protect our most vulnerable in society and support our front-line staff who are putting themselves at risk every day.

Thank you again for your continued support, and we will be in touch with more information as soon as we have it.

I came across a quote that I feel sums up the situation best. As always, best wishes.

“Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass; it’s about learning how to dance in the rain”

Craig Bennett
Head Teacher