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Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: Coronavirus update – school closure to most pupils

The letter sent home yesterday informed you that we have been instructed to close the school to almost all children from this afternoon until further notice. We have now received further information, published late last night. It states that:

...the most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading. That is why 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 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 vulnerable individuals in wider society.

Schools are, therefore, being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are key workers to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

The most important thing to take from Government Guidance is that:

If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.

If you work in one of the critical sectors listed below, and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your child will be prioritised for a childcare place:

The categories of key workers identified by the Government are as follows:

Health and social care

This includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

Education and childcare

This includes 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

This includes those essential to the running of the justice system, religious staff, charities and workers delivering key frontline services, those responsible for the management of the deceased, and journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting.

Local and national government

This only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the COVID-19 response or delivering essential public services such as the payment of benefits, including in government agencies and arms length bodies.

Food and other necessary goods

This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines).

Public safety and national security

This includes police and support staff, Ministry of Defence civilians, contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic), fire and rescue service employees (including support staff), National Crime Agency staff, those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas.

Transport

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

Utilities, communication and financial services

This includes staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure), the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage), information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the COVID-19 response, as well as key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services), postal services and delivery, payments providers and waste disposal sectors.

The latest government scientific advice on the proportion of pupils that it is advisable to provide direct support for in order to maintain efforts to delay the spread of the virus, is a maximum of 20% of the school population. We have already received a high number of requests for childcare places and, in order to minimise the number of children in school, priority will be given to families where **both** parents are keyworkers or where a **sole parent** is a key worker.

We may be able to accommodate other children of key workers, up to a maximum of 20% of the school population, **if** all the places are not taken by children who fall into the following categories:

- vulnerable children
- families where **both** parents are keyworkers
- a **sole parent** is a key worker

This will be dependent on the number of staff available for work.

No parents/carers are required to send their children to school at this time.

This childcare provision for key workers will remain subject to the school having sufficient staff available to enable them to remain open. Further support for provision may then be offered through the Local Authority but we do not have details of this at present.

Thank you once again for your continued support and cooperation.

Kind regards,
Mrs. Evans