



Monday 19th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

School will close on Friday and on Monday it will reopen to provide a reduced provision offer for certain pupils. Some families will receive an offer of a place to attend the school during this time of wider closure. Only families with an offer of a place should attend school. The government has asked schools to provide care for children of key workers and vulnerable children. This is not a statutory requirement – schools are being asked to help as part of a national response.

This will be a very different type of provision than schools usually provide; for these pupils, it will be about care, not education. This is about keeping children safe and allowing key workers (such as NHS staff) to go to work and care for the sick, or to keep food supply chains moving. All expectations regarding educational provision have been lifted. Schools will be free to determine what the provision looks like and what they deem to be best for the pupils they are supporting.

Critically, as it is schools that are responsible for offering places to pupils who may be eligible to attend this provision, we need to identify who is eligible and, in some cases, prioritise offers to families according to capacity, need and health advice for PHE.

It's important to reiterate that school leaders will still need to make individual decisions about whether it is safe to open their school. And that applies from now onwards. It remains the case that if a school does not have enough staff to care for pupils safely (even based on the new 'reduced provision' approach) then, subject to a risk assessment and consultation with the chair of governors, a full or partial closure may be necessary. Schools will need to keep this decision under daily review.

The government has said it will publish a list of 'Key Workers' tomorrow. We understand it will include teachers, TAs, school catering staff, as well as all NHS staff, delivery drivers, those involved in the food supply chain and potentially others.

Our understanding is that the highest priority will be for families where both parents are keyworkers or where a sole parent is a key worker, but there may be a degree of flexibility around this to help schools manage individual circumstances.

To help us in preparing for this we are asking parents to inform us if they believe they meet the key worker criteria and would like their child to be considered for a place in the 'reduced provision'. With this in mind, if you think you may be eligible, please complete and return the information sheet and return it to school tomorrow. We can then use that information to offer places based on our capacity. This may mean schools have to prioritise according to need. We are seeking guidance from the government on the order of priority should that be the case.

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 by the government as a maximum of 20% of the school population; and b) the number of staff available to work. This may require schools to prioritise which pupils receive an offer, according to greatest need. As this provision will be in place to enable key workers to go to their place of employment, children who are offered a place should only come to school when their key worker parent/s are at work.

The key message is that schools are closed, but we are doing what we can to support our families, given these unprecedented circumstances.

Kind regards,



Christina Hall
(Headteacher)

