

Dear Parent/Carer,

As you know, all schools in England will close on Monday to the vast majority of pupils. This is an unprecedented move and we have no indication about how long this closure could last. Pupils will not be expected to sit exams but we do not yet know how assessment judgements are to be made in place of these. Like you, I have lots of other questions about the implications for closure in areas such as holiday dates and as we receive this information we will continue to update all parents.

A small number of parents will be able to access childcare in school from next week if they meet the eligibility criteria set out by the government. This can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

If you have not already informed us that you meet the criteria and you will need childcare support please can you ring school as a matter of urgency today so we are aware.

As someone who is married to a NHS worker, I am very pleased the government has recognised the need to keep frontline staff able to work and we intend to do everything we can to provide these essential services. However, there are also some very important points in the guidance and I want to reinforce these key messages to parents from the outset. Firstly, this is a childcare arrangement and it should only ever be used as an **absolute last resort** where no alternative childcare arrangements can be made at home on that day. Although the list is extensive, the government is also asking schools to keep the number of pupils in the school below 10% to avoid spreading infection and keeping schools closed any longer than necessary. Sending any children where it is not essential to do so means we may be at risk of rising above this number. I am in early discussions with other Head Teachers in the locality about potentially utilising shared sites so that where schools have higher numbers of eligible parents some of these children can access childcare at a different local school. This might mean your child may have to access the childcare at a different school.

In the meantime, in the event of not having sufficient staff to operate or where too many children arrive on any given day we are currently discussing a possible way of prioritising key worker roles to avoid closing. As a last resort, this may involve us having to apply some additional eligibility criteria to keep numbers low enough to meet the government requirements. The building will initially open from 7:45am until 3:15pm next week but these hours may also change going forward.

We will not be delivering taught lessons for these children so as not to disadvantage any pupils who are distance learning from home.

A separate letter to parents will follow shortly explaining how to access ongoing home learning opportunities and I would ask parents to be patient and understand that this is also new territory for most schools and is no substitute for learning in a classroom environment. We will be working very hard over the coming weeks to develop our own knowledge of what high quality distance learning looks like particularly for younger learners.

We are currently pressing our school meals provider to establish how pupils in receipt of Free School Meals can continue to claim meals and hope to be able to update you later today.

Next week, we will have a small group of staff in school in case you need to contact school either via email or telephone. We will also endeavour to communicate with you via Parent Mail, Twitter and the school website as soon as we receive any important updates or further information.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you on behalf of myself and all the school team for your kind words and support during the last few weeks. Working at this school is a privilege and we are always made to feel like part of a large family each morning when we arrive at school. This has been emotionally draining for staff, pupils and parents alike. The coming weeks and months will prove challenging for us all and we now intend to focus heavily on providing the best opportunities we can for home learning as well as on preparing the school as best we can in order to reopen and provide the highest level of education that your children deserve.