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Dear Parents & Carers,

We hope you are all well and staying safe

The government is regularly updating its guidance to schools and parents regarding the closure of educational settings, it can be found [here](#).

The key principles are:

- **If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.**
- **If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.**

### **Critical workers**

Government guidance says, '**many parents working in [critical] sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. And every child who can be safely cared for at home should be**'.

A list of critical sectors can be found [here](#)

### **Vulnerable children**

Government guidance says, 'vulnerable children include children who are supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs, including child in need plans, on Child Protection Plans, 'Looked After' Children, young carers, disabled children and those with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.'

The government adds, 'we know that schools will also want to support other children facing social difficulties and we will support head teachers to do so.'

There is no requirement for parents to take up the offer of a school place. The government says, 'this is an offer to parents and carers and there is no requirement for parents and carers to send their children to school if they do not need or wish to do so.'

Interestingly the guidance says, 'for vulnerable children, your child's social worker will work with you to assess the best option for your child.'

### **Special schools**

The government says, 'special schools, colleges and local authorities are advised to make case by case basis assessments of the health and safeguarding considerations of pupils and students on an education, health and care (EHC) plan. For some, they will be safer in an education provision.



For others, they will be safer at home. We trust leaders and parents to make these decisions and will support them as required.'

We have managed to maintain safe staffing levels up until now but I will be reviewing the situation on a daily basis to ensure that we can operate safely. I will update the website as needed during this time and will also communicate by text, email and/or telephone if the situation changes.

We have spoken with almost all of you on the telephone to agree arrangements. It would be really helpful in assessing the risk if families could let the school know immediately if their situation changes: you may decide you wish to keep your child at home or may want to see if they can return to school. Some families are concerned because their children have underlying health conditions which mean that they are vulnerable. The advice in this case is to keep them at home if at all possible.

In the meantime, the advice remains the same in terms of trying to contain the infection and so those with a temperature or a new continuous cough should not attend work or school for 7 calendar days. If anyone in your household has symptoms you and your child must stay at home for 14 days, find information [here](#)

We are in close contact with the Local Authority and continue to work with them to make informed decisions about risks associated with Coronavirus. We are receiving updates from the DfE each day and the latest edition can be found [here](#). Advice on social distancing in education and childcare settings issued on 24 March can be found [here](#)

The Department for Education have launched a helpline to answer questions about COVID-19 related to education (although be advised it took me over an hour to get through on the phone, a week ago!). Staff, parents and young people can contact the helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Email: [DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk](mailto:DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk)

Opening hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday).

The advice is that if students or staff are feeling unwell with symptoms of Coronavirus, they are advised to keep away from others and stay at home to stop the infection spreading. The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection:

- Cough
- Difficulty in breathing
- Fever

[Children should be reminded and helped to wash their hands often](#) - to cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue before throwing it in a bin ('Catch It, Bin It, Kill It') and to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

The Department for Education has also informed us that no school should close in response to a suspected (or confirmed) COVID-19 case unless directed to do so by Public Health England. We have also been advised that we should use an alcohol-based sanitiser and will be doing so. If you



have any medical, cultural or other reason why the gel should not be applied can you please contact the school office

Fiona Veitch

Interim Headteacher

