

## Covid-19

### Parent /carer update No4 – 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

Dear Carers and Parents,

Friday was a difficult day for everyone, and I want to say thank-you to you all for your patience and your understanding.

The government has imposed the principles of social distancing on all of us to help prevent the spread of the virus (significantly reducing contact between individuals by preventing group and mass gatherings, urging people to work from home where possible and keeping a set distance away from people outside of your family home as much you can).

On Friday they instructed schools to close their doors and for pupils to work from home

On Friday night they imposed a ban on social gatherings including pubs, clubs, cafes, restaurants, theatres and cinemas, on top of the current ban on sport, fitness and recreational centres.

For the vast majority of us, we have never experienced something like this before, and we see the same approach being taken in countries world-wide. We all need to take the advice we are being given as seriously as possible, and to act responsibly and for the common good.

However, the government has fallen short of imposing a complete 'lock down', and have asked schools to continue to offer limited on-site education to support families where parents are deemed 'critical workers' or who fall under a category of 'vulnerable children' (families receiving support from Social Care).

The list of 'critical workers' was expanded by the government and was only released around midnight on Thursday, which contributed to making Friday a difficult day.

I have to balance the requirement of continuing to provide some on-site education with the principles of social distancing, and this means asking staff, many of whom have children of their own or who have underlying health issues and are under the same pressures as



everyone else, to continue to maintain close contact with others, so please be gentle with us!

We contacted every family on Friday where possible, and will complete the task on Monday. Using the information that I have been asking for and that you have given us regarding your occupation, we produced a list of those children whom we will continue to see in school and those whom we will continue to support at home.

We have got a plan for how we will to continue to offer some education to the children at home, and again we are very dependent on information from you about:

- **whether or not you have access to the internet**
- **whether or not your child has a device that they can use at home to work on that has a keyboard and connects to the internet**

I'm sure over the course of next week we will iron things out and get into a routine, as class leaders establish their daily contact with you. Communication will be vital, and this will be either via email or via the phone as usual to start with. Let's make sure we tackle any issues early and share information that is helpful and supportive of each other.

Once we get into a routine we will also be looking to improve what we do and how we do it. The government talked about a 12 week period to start with, so we are looking at having to find a way to manage for the foreseeable future.

The week starting Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March will be really important therefore as we fine tune what we are doing and get things sorted and settled. There are a couple of families I am waiting to hear back from on Monday, so if you promised me a call, please make sure you do.

#### **Transport:**

I am hoping for those children who need to come to school and who receive transport, this will happen as usual. If there is an issue with transport on Monday, please let school know as soon as possible.

#### **The school day:**

At the moment the times of the school day remain the same, but again we will monitor this as we go through the week. To observe social distancing, please can I ask you not to arrive earlier than 9.15am and to wait outside school, away from other parents, instead of coming into the reception area. Likewise when you come to collect from 2.30pm onwards. I know this sounds horrible, but these are the kind of things we are all being asked to think about at

the moment. It would help a lot if we can stagger the start and end of the day, so if you are not on a taxi, I'm happy for you to be flexible with your times around taxi arrivals and departures.

### **Free School Meals**

The government expects schools to continue to provide all families in receipt of free school meals with a daily meal, and this is not easy for us considering how far away some families live.

We are working on a voucher system with a company called Wonde, which (hopefully) will be up and running during the course of next week, and will be back-dated to Monday. So please keep a close watch out for emails that will explain how this will work, and where you can use the vouchers and what they can be used for. The scheme we want to use lists a number of major supermarket companies. It will be much better than asking people to come to school to collect a grab bag!

I think that's all for now. I will continue to update you as things progress.

Stay safe!

Robin Elms