

## COVID-19 Update for Parents and Carers: 20th March 2020

Over the last few weeks, we have closely followed Government and Public Health England advice with headteachers, teaching and non-teaching staff across all of our nine Trust schools working incredibly hard to keep schools open until now.

In line with the Government's announcement on Wednesday:

***All Trust schools will close at the end of the school day on Friday March 20<sup>th</sup> and will remain closed until further notice for the majority of pupils.***

As part of the initial announcement about school closures, the Government stated that:

- schools will remain open as a **childcare service only** from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March for specified groups of children to help support parents who are key workers and for more vulnerable children including over the Easter holiday period
- **for parents who are keyworkers children's attendance for the childcare service is NOT compulsory. If arrangements can be made for children to stay safely at home parents should do so**
- provision of food, likely to be in the form of food vouchers, will be made for pupils who qualify for Free School Meals (FSM) – further details to follow
- SATs testing will not take place in May

Guidance published late on Thursday evening (19.3.20) has clearly identified the keyworker criteria for which children are able to access childcare at school.

To access this guidance from the Department of Education please visit this website:

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

### WHO ARE CLASSIFIED AS KEYWORKERS?

#### 1. Health and social care workers

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.

## **2. Education and childcare workers**

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.

## **3. Key public services workers**

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.

## **4. Local and national government workers**

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.

## **5. Food and other necessary goods workers**

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).

## **6. Public safety and national security workers**

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.

## **7. Transport workers**

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.

## **8. Utilities, communication and financial services workers**

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.

**If you feel you fall into one of these categories please contact School immediately and please also confirm with your employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, your specific role is necessary for the continued provision of your particular public service.**

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

**Our responsibility for safeguarding children will continue despite school closure and the new arrangements for limited childcare provision. If you have safeguarding concerns about any child please share them immediately with us:**

**Safeguarding Concern Reporting Beechwood: 01384816175**

**Safeguarding Concern Reporting : Dudley Children's Services**

**During office hours 0300 555 0050 (Option 4)**

**Out of Hours 0300 555 8574**

## **AND FINALLY**

Be reassured that we intend to do our absolute best to maintain as much stability for children's education as possible and we have been planning for this eventuality. Whilst it is not possible to fully replicate the school educational experience for children whilst at home, we have put in place contingency plans so that all pupils can access appropriate learning activities and teachers are able to continue to support learning albeit at a distance. Government advice to parents remains as follows until further notice:

## **KEY MESSAGES FROM GOVERNMENT FOR ALL PARENTS**

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
2. 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.
3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.



COVID-19 Briefing 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

4. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.
5. Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.

We recognise that this is an unsettling, disruptive and worrying time for us all. We remain here to help all our families as much as we possibly can. Please contact us if you require support or clarification.

**Our contact number: 01384816715**

**Our email address: [info@beechwood.school](mailto:info@beechwood.school)**

Take care and stay well. We will communicate again shortly.