Friday 20th March

**Key Workers and ‘alternate provision’**

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you may be aware, we are expected to continue to provide care for a limited number of children. We have been advised that this should be up to approximately 20% of our school population which is around 65 of our children. It goes without saying that fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society.

This may require us to prioritise which pupils receive an offer, according to greatest need.

This is not about ‘entitlement’ it is about doing the right thing for the greater good of society; accommodating the greatest need and limiting social interaction and the spread of the virus whilst also allowing school to stay open for those who need it the most.

In line with Government expectations, we are offering our provision to those children who have Education and Health Care Plans, children who, for a range of reasons, are identified as being vulnerable and children of Key Workers. The list of Key Workers is long but the guidance is clear parents should only take up our offer of provision if absolutely necessary. If you can find an alternative arrangement that does not include groups expected, for their safety to self isolate eg grandparents, – then you should do so.

This is NOT every child of a key worker on that list. It is only the children whose parents have no other options, this should very significantly reduce the number of children and by doing so hopefully keep the children in attendance and their families, as well as teachers, safe.

What will provision look like in school?

This is 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 to go to work and care for the sick, or to keep food supply chains moving.

Can the school still decide they need to close?

It remains the case that if we do 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. We will review the situation daily.

Again, fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread to staff and therefore allow the school to remain open.

Please keep your children at home if possible. If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.

Planning and timetabling.

As the situation develops the school will be taking a three- phase approach:

1. The next two weeks

2. Easter holidays

3. The summer term.

Schools have been put in a very difficult position by this announcement. There is a very real sense of ‘managing the best we can’ with the staff available.

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

As I have already said, fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society; including your children and my staff – thus allowing the school to stay open to those who need it the most.

Thank you to all who are working hard to support our community and the most vulnerable in our society; especially those in the NHS.

Take care all.

Jackie Harland

**Head Teacher**