

North Down Primary Principals' Group



20th March 2020

Yesterday evening the Minister for Education in Northern Ireland, Peter Weir MLA, made a statement outlining that all schools will close on Friday 20th March.

Schools have been requested to provide a childcare facility with a skeleton staff for children of identified key workers. However, the statement left school principals with numerous questions and we have sought urgent clarification. As a result, schools need time to plan for this provision and therefore every primary school in the North Down Area will be closed to all pupils on Monday.

While we wish to support you and your families at this difficult time, we need to ensure that the provision of childcare does not increase the risk of infection for either your children or our staff.

It is vitally important that schools have an indication of how many children meet the criteria outlined below. Parents should contact school by 11am on Monday morning outlining how they meet the criteria, if they wish to be considered for the offer of a place. This can be by emailing the attached application form.

Before contacting school – Points to Consider:

- A list of key workers, issued by the Department of Education is listed overleaf. Only children with **BOTH** parents working as key workers, and **both parents out at work at the same time** should consider attending school, in single parent families, the individual parent **MUST** be a key worker.
- If possible, alternative childcare arrangements should be sought before deciding to send your child to school. For example, with other family member, friends etc. Please try and use schools as a last resort. **This is to try and limit the number of children and adults together in a small space in line with recent social distancing guidance.**
- Children attending will be required to wear school uniform. Please be advised that schools will be performing childcare duties, rather than teaching.

Once key information has been gathered and decisions made only families with an offer of a place should attend the school. It could potentially be impossible to accept the number of families who may apply for provision, given the extensive nature of the Minister's keyworker list. Schools will be in contact with parents requesting places early next week.

Yours sincerely

NORTH DOWN PRIMARY PRINCIPALS' GROUP

LIST OF KEY WORKERS AS OUTLINED ON DOCUMENTATION ISSUED TO SCHOOLS ON 19TH MARCH 2020

Please work with us to ensure that schools operate with a limited number of children and staff

- Health and Social Care. This includes doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, home carers and staff required to maintain our health and social care sector
- Education and childcare. This includes nursery and teaching staff, non-teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who will remain active during the Covid-19 response
- Public safety and national security. This includes civilians and officers in the police (including key contractors), Fire and Rescue Service, prison service and other national security roles
- Transport. This will include those keeping air, water, road and rail transport modes operating during the Covid-19 response
- Utilities and Communication. This includes staff needed for oil, gas, electricity and water (including sewage) and primary industry supplies, to continue during the Covid-19 response, as well as key staff in telecommunications, post and delivery, services and waste disposal
- Food and other necessary goods. This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution and sale, as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (eg hygiene, medical etc)
- Key national and local government including those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the Covid-19 response.



APPLICATION FORM
SCHOOL PROVISION FOR THE CHILDREN OF KEY WORKERS

Please email your response to info@vicpsballyhalbert.newtownards.ni.sch.uk by 11am on Monday 23rd March, with the following information included:

Name of pupil(s): _____ Class: _____
_____ Class: _____
_____ Class: _____

Parent 1 Occupation: _____

Parent 2 Occupation: _____

Explain your individual circumstances and reasons why you feel provision for your child/children should be provided by Victoria PS. Please include other childcare options explored:

Proposed work schedule/hours requested:

Please note that the maximum provision from VPS is 8.45am – 3pm.

There is NO BREAKFAST CLUB option available.

<u>MON</u>	<u>TUES</u>	<u>WED</u>	<u>THURS</u>	<u>FRI</u>
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Please note the following:

- Your application for childcare provision is not acceptance. Principal will inform you of acceptance/decline.
- This will not be a normal school day. Do not expect teaching, school dinners, typical procedures such as Classroom Assistant cover if your child has additional needs.
- As all medications were sent home on Fri 20 March, your child needs to bring their own medication back to school. Due to the staffing timetable, we are asking pupils to be responsible for their own medications. No single adult will be available to do this.
- Pupils should bring a packed lunch and snacks (NO NUTS).
- Pupils should bring their own home learning packs, as unfortunately no additional learning material can be provided. This is to ensure equity for those pupils remaining at home.

Thank you again for your understanding and your commitment to explore every other option available to you BEFORE applying for this provision. I have a duty of care to protect all my staff and their families. I hope that we can all stay safe and work together in these troubling times.

S. Weir

Principal