

Dear parents and carers,

Firstly, can I thank you all for your patience as we try to come to terms with what is happening globally and to plan how we can do our part by continuing to provide a service for our children and for those who need it most.

Secondly, can I take a moment to thank all of our front line keyworkers who are keeping us healthy, safe and well provided for. You are all super heroes in my mind and we all recognise the amazing work that you are doing and hope and pray that you are kept safe and well in the coming weeks and months.

Tomorrow I will go into school to try to prepare to support Key Workers' children on Tuesday. I will be holding staff briefing sessions, carrying out staff training on online learning, deep cleaning and moving furniture in the classrooms to allow for the new set up. We will therefore not be available for phone calls and any communication will need to be via email at present. I can only apologise for this and ask for your understanding as we try to do our best to accommodate those in need.

Please note – the statement by the First Minister regarding ONE KEY ADULT in the family is guidance and NOT statutory; dependent on numbers, schools will apply the TWO KEY ADULT directive.

Social distancing will mean that children will have to be kept 2m apart at desks in classrooms, thus limiting the number of children we can accommodate dependent on the staff we have available -many staff are self-isolating following medical advice and have also been reminded about social distancing and have been told to work from home where possible. Please know, that staff will also need to be 2m from every child in order to keep themselves and their families safe from infection. You will know that this will be incredibly difficult in this situation.

Teaching will not be provided for children who are in school. This will be a childcare facility only. The teachers have done their part for now by offering the home learning packs. While you are getting on with those, the teachers will be working on preparing reports, analysing pupil data, researching ways to provide further online learning and, after Easter, updating their class pages on the school website with online learning ideas and opportunities. They will also be in school, on a rota basis, for safeguarding and other such tasks.

Childcare will be being provided on a rotational basis with staff being in school for slots of no more than 3 hours at a time. Staff will need to stay 2m away from pupils and other staff. This will mean that most of the usual school activities will not be taking place. Children will need to bring all of their own equipment to school as our equipment is currently going through the deep cleaning process. This includes pencils, pens, all play equipment, laptops, ipads... These resources will not be available.

THE SAFEST PLACE FOR YOU CHILD RIGHT NOW IS AT HOME.

If the ratio of staff to pupils decreases, a call will be made to close the school and parents will be informed immediately.

If the Principal is unable to be in school, a call will be made to close the school and parents will be informed immediately.

As the Law states, children of 14 and older are legally allowed to babysit younger siblings, if this applies to you, please avail of this option.

I am writing this message as I want you to realise how difficult this situation is, and to only request a place if ALL other options have been exhausted. I have every respect for our front line services, and the jobs they do in such very difficult situations, but I also have a duty of care to my staff, who are also

front line workers. As, inevitably, numbers of staff available dwindle, new arrangements will have to be put in place.

Staff are continuing to be ASKED to come into school without adequate protective equipment, the least we would expect, but no provision has been made by the authorities as yet. This concerns me greatly.

Some of our applications have come from families who are not blue light or hospital staff – I would implore you, in the interests of our school community and beyond, to enquire about working from home, swapping shifts with colleagues who do not have child care issues etc. – I will repeat: **THE SAFEST PLACE FOR YOUR CHILD IS NOW AT HOME**, and schools should be your LAST option when everything else has been exhausted.

Having read this, and being more informed about the situation, if you require a school placement please email the school giving us the information required on the form you received on Friday. Please be clear on which days you require child care and for how many hours on each day so that I can work out staffing rotas.

Sorry for the long message, but I have to make sure you know the situation for all involved. I will be in touch with school request applicants on Monday afternoon via email only. I am aware that some of you have been having trouble with Accelerated Reader login and I will ask Mrs Atcheson to look into that issue and update you via the school website if we can solve the problem.

I'm sure you will have many questions over the coming weeks and the way to ask these questions is via email. I will do my best to answer your questions as more information becomes available to me. Can I ask please though that you give me time to sort the immediate issue for key workers and then I promise I will get back to you with any other queries as quickly as I can.

School will be open for the children who have been offered a place for their requested slots from 8.45 am – 3pm only, from Tuesday.

Please rest assured that I am here for you and will do what I can. Even when I am not in school, I am working away at home to do my best for you and to set up what I can to help out. Good luck everyone, take care, abide by the social distancing guidance and please keep safe.

Mrs Weir