

19/3/2020

Dear All,

I know that many of you will be concerned about the impact of yesterday's news, and that you will have many questions that I am not, at this point, able to answer. I would, however, like to reassure you that our dedicated and committed staff team will do everything that we can to provide the education and community service that you need us to.

Over the next 24 hours I am hoping that we receive more guidance from central government about the expectations for our role, and I want to reassure you that we already have home learning plans in place.

We received the following from the DfE last night:

To provide parents, student and staff with the certainty they need we are announcing that schools, colleges and early years settings will be closed to everyone except children of key workers and vulnerable children from Monday, as part of the country's ongoing response to coronavirus.

Examples of these workers include NHS staff, police and delivery drivers who need to be able to go to work.

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those with Education, Health and Care Plans.

A full list of key worker categories will be published by the Cabinet Office tomorrow.

Children who do not fall into these groups should remain at home with appropriate care.

Where schools are unable to provide this reduced provision, local authorities will work with the Department for Education's regional teams to ensure an alternative option is available.

We are expecting early years providers and sixth form and further education colleges to do the same. We are working with Her Majesty's Treasury on the financial support required. We are also asking that independent schools and boarding schools follow the same approach.

Where possible, we would encourage settings to stay open for this purpose throughout the Easter holidays.

Many universities and other higher education institutions are already taking necessary steps to keep their staff and students safe and where possible keep providing education. We are confident vice-chancellors are making the right decisions and the Department for Education continues to support them in doing so.

#### **Update on assessments and examinations**

We can confirm that we will not go ahead with assessments or exams, and that we will not be publishing performance tables for this academic year.

We will work with the sector and Ofqual to ensure children get the qualifications they need.

And we will do whatever is necessary to support local authorities, settings, schools and teachers through the weeks and months ahead.

#### **Free school meal provision**

We will give schools the flexibility to provide meals or vouchers to children eligible for free school meals. Some schools are already doing this, and we will reimburse the costs. As soon as possible, we will put in place a national voucher system.

Thank you once again for everything you are doing at this difficult time.

The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP

Secretary of State for Education

As soon as I have a better idea of the expectations of our school, I will email to let you know. Please check your emails regularly, as we will need to determine how many children we will be receiving with parents who are defined as key workers.

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I would ask that you do not contact the school office for updates - I promise that we will share any information as soon as we have it.

Please also be assured that, if your child is learning from home, we are still open and able to provide support and guidance for their learning over the coming weeks, and we will endeavour to keep in regular contact.

As I said to the staff this morning, please try not to worry - this is likely to be imperfect for a long time, but if we support one another and all pull together, it will be the best that it can be in such a tricky situation, and as Matthew McConaughey said to the world yesterday, 'Let's see if we can make some lemonade out of this lemon that we're living in the middle of -- turn a red light into a green light and just keep living.'

Yours sincerely,



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