Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you are all well and keeping safe in these difficult times. It is with great sadness that I am writing to you again following the announcement that primary schools will be moving to remote learning from 5th January. **The critical worker provision will commence on the 6th January.**

As a staff we are extremely upset that we are yet again having to change our Spring Term Plans, however, my first priority has to be the health, safety and wellbeing of all those in the school community. Once again we must be united as a community to protect those within it from risk of harm. The late notice about the closure today means that it is impossible for school to have the time to plan effectively for these changes and as a result of this the governing body have made the decision with great regret to close the school to all children tomorrow (Tuesday 5th Jan 2021) in order for school to complete and prepare the necessary provision and risk assessments. This is not a decision that has been made lightly and myself and the Governors sincerely apologise for any inconvenience this causes. This is not the fault of the school but of the last minute government decisions that have created an impossible task for schools across England and to some extent the UK. Children will all have access to the online learning which is available on the year group home learning page for tomorrow and there will be a Google Meet sessions available for the classes, one at 9.30 and then again at 10.15 for the children to access some contact time with their teachers and friends. Further information will then follow tomorrow afternoon about how school will proceed.

As with the previous lockdown in March, school will return to providing critical worker provision and vulnerable provision during the period of assisted remote learning. The Government’s definition of a critical worker and vulnerable child is extensive and unless we prioritise, we may not be able to support the families and workers that require the most help. This evening the school has sent out a key worker survey on School Spider but should the school receive too many requests for critical worker provision we may have to bring in a tiered approach. This survey must be completed by 10am on the 5th January in order for the school to plan and produce the necessary arrangements. It is essential that the school are able to plan effectively in order to keep staff, pupils and the community safe. There will be an expectation that these children attend each day for continuity.

Current government guidance regarding eligibility for school care as of Monday 23rd March 2020 was that children with at least one parent or carer who are identified as critical workers by the government can potentially send their children into school if required. However, we must emphasise that the government guidance also states that “many parents working in these critical sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. Every child who can safely be cared for at home should be.” Therefore, the information you may be asked to provide to school over the next day about your situations and why you require school-based childcare will be essential. If you are a critical worker, we may be asking for you to give us contact details including the full name and telephone number of your supervisor so that we can clarify that your active role is a necessity in these challenging circumstances. We may also need to get back in touch with you via telephone for further clarification.

Please note, the current guidelines around self-isolation regarding symptoms of the coronavirus including a temperature of over 37.8 and/or a persistent cough are still in force. In the next few days school leaders will have to make some incredibly difficult decisions and hold some extremely challenging conversations with families who are understandably distressed at this time. We ask that you please work with us and not against us as we do this, despite the difficulties that may arise for us all.

**As a country, we need to do all we can to reduce the spread of COVID-19 virus and the government has asked parents wherever possible to keep their children at home. If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading. Schools are being asked to provide provision for those who absolutely need to attend and cannot be kept safe at home.**

Please try and support us to stay open for key workers and vulnerable children. It is important to underline that schools, colleges and other educational establishments remain safe places for children. But the 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. If one parent is able to work from home, the expectation is that they will have the ability to keep their child safe with them.

For vulnerable children include children who are supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs, including child in need plans, on child protection plans, ‘looked after’ children, young carers, disabled children and those with education, health and care (EHC) plans or those deemed vulnerable by school, I will be contacting you in the next day or so with regards to this - you do not need to contact school.

Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined below. Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. And every child who can be safely cared for at home should be. We are envisaging that our numbers will remain relatively small in order to keep everyone as safe as we can.

Please, therefore, follow these key principles:

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.

Parents of children who are not in school 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. If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors listed below, and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children will be prioritised for education provision: If workers think they fall within the critical categories above they should confirm with their employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service. If your school is closed then please contact your local authority, who will seek to redirect you to a local school in your area that your child, or children, can attend.

**Key worker Criteria: If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors listed below, and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children will be prioritised for education provision:**

**Critical workers**

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections.

**Health and social care**

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.

**Education and childcare**

This includes:

* childcare
* support and teaching staff
* social workers
* specialist education professionals who must remain active during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response to deliver this approach

**Key public services**

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
* journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting

**Local and national government**

This only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of:

* the coronavirus (COVID-19) response, and the delivery of and response to EU transition
* essential public services, such as the payment of benefits and the certification or checking of goods for import and export (including animal products, animals, plants and food), including in government agencies and arms length bodies

**Food and other necessary goods**

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)

**Public safety and national security**

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 coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and EU transition)
* 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

**Transport and border**

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response and EU transition, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass and those constructing or supporting the operation of critical transport and border infrastructure through which supply chains pass.

**Utilities, communication and financial services**

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 coronavirus (COVID-19) response
* 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
* waste disposal sectors

**If workers think they fall within the critical categories above they should confirm with their employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service.**

I’m sorry once more for the short notice with this, but the situation is of course out of our hands.

Yours faithfully

N Longstaff

Headteacher