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20th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Children Eligible for School Attendance from Monday 23rd March 2020

Further information has now been released regarding which children will be eligible for school from Monday 23rd March including clear guidelines in terms of the scope and purpose of the school closure for a majority of children, the responsibility there is on parents to keep children at home where this is possible and also more information about the definition of key workers.

The guidance is as follows:

“As a country, we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. That is why the government has given clear guidance on self-isolation, household isolation and social distancing.

And the most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.

That is why the government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.

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.

Schools are, therefore, being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

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.

We know that schools will also want to support other children facing social difficulties and we will support head teachers to do so.

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.

Please, therefore, follow these key principles:

- If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
- 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 should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
- Parents 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.
- Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.

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:

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 nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who must remain active during the 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, and 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 COVID-19 response or delivering essential public services such as the payment of benefits, 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 COVID-19 pandemic), 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

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems 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 COVID-19 response, as well as 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 and 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.

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.

We are grateful for the work of teachers and workers in educational settings for continuing to provide for the children of the other critical workers of our country. It is an essential part of our national effort to combat this disease.”

This is the guidance in full. If you wish to read it for yourself on-line then the link is here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

Yesterday lots of other information came out from various bodies with ideas about what the announcement may mean in practice. Please be aware that the guidance above is **the** national guidance and it is this we will be working to as a school.

All other children will need to stay at home, so we ask that you do not send your child into school from Monday onwards.

In a letter yesterday morning we asked for parents and carers who think they may be eligible to let us know and we had a number of responses. Today we are asking all parents who believe they may be key workers and need this service to email us (at admin@howes.coventry.sch.uk) with responses to the questions below or to complete and return the attached slip.

Please note, the eighth and ninth questions are intended to apply to children who are vulnerable or have EHCP Plans. The guidance specifically notes in point 2 that “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,” however you also must consider, taking into account all of our shared responsibilities for minimising social contact during this period, point 1 which states: “If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.” In practice, if one parent is a keyworker but the other parent is not, it could be expected that the parent who is not would stay at home and look after their children – even where this causes difficulties with their work. A single parent who is a key worker would not have another parent or carer to look after their children.

Name of Child and Class:	
Name of Child and Class:	
Name of Child and Class:	
Name of Parent 1:	
Profession of Parent 1	
Name of Parent 2 (if applicable):	
Profession of Parent 2	
Reason why child(ren) would be eligible:	
Is there another parent/carer available who could be available to care for children?*	

*Following the guidance that this carer should not themselves be in a vulnerable category

Please understand, in the context of the guidance above, that the intention of this is that it will be a limited service in terms of numbers. The children in school during this time will have their curriculum based on the same materials that we will be sharing with all other children.

We know that many families are going to find the school closure extremely challenging in many ways but we all have to operate within the guidelines we are being given. Everyone has a social responsibility at this time to act appropriately and with respect to all. We have been very proud of the Howes community during this challenging period and I know that same spirit will continue over the next weeks – we need to remain a strong school community even when geographically separated.

Please be aware that all parents and children have a right to confidentiality regarding eligibility for this continuing service at school. We will operate to the government’s guidelines fairly and we will not be able to discuss or share information about other family’s circumstances with any other parent or carer.

We would ask you to get in touch as soon as possible and if you can by 2pm, Friday 20th March. This will help us organise Monday 23rd March and beyond and we will be in contact with relevant families regarding this as soon as we can. Obviously we would plan for this to be before the end of the day but we would encourage everyone to check email regularly, even over the weekend.

What we will continue doing while your child is at home

Your child's learning is of course important to us, so we'll continue to help your child to learn. A pack of work was sent home with your child yesterday and we have set up a page for home learning on our website: <https://howesprimary.co.uk/children/working-at-home/>. We will try to update this as regularly as we can to ensure that you have access to many free online resources. If you find any useful ones please let us know via the school Twitter account and we can share these with all families.

We'll re-open fully as soon as we can and will let you know when this is by text message, via our school Twitter account: @HowesCoventry and on the school website: www.howesprimary.co.uk.

Thank you for working with us in these challenging times.

Sioux Cooke
Headteacher

Sue Roberts
Chair of Governors

PLEASE RETURN ASAP (IDEALLY BY 2PM FRIDAY 20TH MARCH) OR SEND THE INFORMATION THROUGH TO admin@howes.coventry.sch.uk

I/We believe that as parent(s) we fall in to the key worker category or have a child who has an EHCP or a social worker and I/We would appreciate that after the main school closure that my child/children would be able to continue to attend Howes Primary School if the school is able to safely remain open.

Name of Child and Class:	
Name of Child and Class:	
Name of Child and Class:	
Name of Parent 1:	
Profession of Parent 1	
Name of Parent 2 (if applicable):	
Profession of Parent 2 (if applicable):	
For children in identified categories: Reason why child(ren) would be eligible:	
For children in identified categories: Is there another parent/carer available who could be available to care for children?	

