

Friday 20th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As previously shared, schools have been directed to close today and remain closed until further notice **except for children of key workers and vulnerable children**, as part of the country's ongoing response to COVID-19 (coronavirus).

At ten past midnight today, the UK Government issued the following guidance -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision>

I have highlighted some key points below -

GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE -

The government is asking "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."

"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 (in the above linked document).

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 (in the above linked document), and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children will be prioritised for education provision."

Further advice and guidance for parents and carers is available 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#critical-workers>

PORTESHAM C OF E VA PRIMARY SCHOOL'S RESPONSE -

These are exponential times and in such times we will do **everything** we can to stand together with our community. To this end, our School and kitchen **WILL REMAIN OPEN AND DELIVER PROVISION FOR THE CHILDREN OF KEY WORKERS** who have **NO OTHER OPTIONS OPEN TO THEM.**

We commit to sustaining this provision for as long as required, Monday to Friday including through the upcoming Easter Holidays. We will do **everything** we can to help this national effort.

If you are a key worker and require the use of our provision, please contact me **URGENTLY** via email, directly at – vprior@portesham.dorset.sch.uk. Anyone with questions, should email me directly at vprior@portesham.dorset.sch.uk

Please be assured that everybody in school is doing everything we can to sustain provision for as long as we can. As ever, we hope that you all stay well and safe, keep in touch.

Kind regards,

Mrs Vicky Prior and Clive Burgess MBE

Headteacher

Chair of Governors