

Dear Parents,

The government's guidelines regarding key workers was released during the early hours of Friday morning (the link is below). As you can imagine, the guidance has raised as many questions as answers it sought to provide. The following information is based on the given information by Government:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision?fbclid=IwAR0bw2mh1vPBfncuKKMfNm0eexgk0q65mvG-esGQBavtsVAe\\_bcImlBIF9A](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision?fbclid=IwAR0bw2mh1vPBfncuKKMfNm0eexgk0q65mvG-esGQBavtsVAe_bcImlBIF9A)

1. Schools are to close on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> March for the foreseeable future – Reduce social contact so that we can slow / restrict the spread of the virus – we **all have a responsibility and role** to play in this action. **The way I have explained this to the children is through the 'pass the parcel' analogy. The virus is the parcel and in a normal game of pass the parcel, everyone touches the parcel (in this case the virus) and passes it on. Lots of people come into contact with it. If you are all at home, can I pass the parcel on to you? That is the reason we are having to close the schools, so that it becomes difficult for the virus to be passed around. This helped the older children to understand this unprecedented decision to close schools across the country.**
2. Schools are to close on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> March for the foreseeable future – this is for the **many** children. Schools will become childcare settings from Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, for those children whose parents are deemed 'key workers' or those children who are classed as vulnerable, and who **have no other provision** for their children (If a spouse or partner is not classed as a key worker, then your child should be at home). Further advice is being released during the day. As the days and weeks progress, these guidelines will change and those who are eligible from week to week will change. If you have **no other alternative** than to use school next week, please be considering an alternative to this, as within a week, things may change again.

I am expecting in the coming days that schools will be given a maximum number of pupils we are allowed to prioritise. Please be thinking of alternative provision over the weekend and in the coming week.

As a nation and community of people, we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Please, therefore, follow these key recommendations from the document:

- 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 in accordance with the most up to date guidance.*
- 3. 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.*
- 4. 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.*

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:

This morning, Mr Gore and Mrs Langin have been in contact with those parents who are key workers or classed as being able to access school if required – those who contacted school, as requested earlier in the week.

Later today, I will update you all regarding this area and many others including: meal provision for those eligible and other key questions you may have. I have been in contact with the Local Authority seeking clarification on some matters.

Sorry that I cannot offer more information at the moment. As I write more information is coming into school and I am being assured the Local Authority is working on guideline for our school (all the schools within Wigan).

Thank you once again for your patience in these unusual times.

Take care

Kind Regards

Mr McDermott