

20 March 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

I write with the latest update regarding the coronavirus epidemic and the situation at the College.

School Closure

To reiterate, the school is closed from Monday 23 March 2020 until further notice. HM Government have asked schools during this time to provide 'care' for a 'limited number of children' — namely those 'who are vulnerable and whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home'. The full list of 'critical workers' was published late last night, and we have attached it at the end of this communication for your convenience. The list and guidance can also be accessed using the link at the bottom of this letter, where you will also find a link to the new information from HM Government for parents and carers on the 'Closure of educational settings'.

We have sent out a link accompanying this letter to a '[COVID-19 Reduced Provision](#)' survey that we are asking all parents/carers to complete as a matter of urgency. Please ensure that it is completed by midnight Saturday 21 March 2020 at the latest. This will allow us to ensure that we and the Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust can make the appropriate arrangements for such reduced provision. We will be in contact again as soon as we have collated all the necessary information from the survey and have arranged the reduced provision that we may be able to offer.

The information we need to gather via this survey will allow us to ascertain and plan what arrangements we may be able to implement in order to provide the reduced 'care' provision when the school is closed. Once we have all the information we require to hand, we will be able to plan appropriately and make subsequent arrangements. I must emphasise, however, that the Government wants parents/carers to minimise children's travel and their mixing socially so that the spread of the virus can be contained. It is crucial that you take note of the Government's clear statement that where possible, **every** child who can be safely cared for at home should be. To reiterate:

The government has asked ALL parents to 'keep their children at home, wherever possible'. They have stated that for ALL parents, including those that fall into the categories above, 'if it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.'

We therefore appeal to parents and carers to follow the first principle of keeping their children at home if possible, from Monday onwards, and to only use school provision if there is no safe alternative. The 'critical worker' list is extensive, and we simply do not know yet if we will be able to cope with the number of children who could potentially arrive on Monday morning. I reproduce below, for your convenience, the **Key Principles** that HM Government ask us to follow with respect to the provision of 'care' during school closure:

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:

- (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.
- (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.
- (5) 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:

To reiterate, children who do not have a social worker, or do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan, or who are not the children of critical workers, should remain at home with appropriate care, so you should not send your child into school from Monday until further notice. Any student who attends school from Monday 23 March 2020 when they should not, will be expected to be collected from school immediately.

GCSE, A-Level and other examinations

As of writing, there have yet been no updates beyond the confirmation from HM Government on 18 March 2020 that all assessments and examinations have been cancelled for this academic year. We will of course update you with further information when it becomes available.

Remote Learning

Please see the detail outlined in my letter yesterday. We will also be providing an additional document that lists a range of some superb online resources that you may use to support learning from home that are free for access. A range of organisations have made their online platforms free to use during the coronavirus, so we want to make sure that all our students will be able to benefit from such.

Links to current advice

(Please do check these pages regularly as they are updated constantly.)

- Maintaining Educational Provision (including 'Critical Worker' lists and principles).
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>
- Information for parents and carers on the closure of educational settings
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>
- NHS Health information and advice
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- Guidance for educational settings on COVID-19

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

- Ofqual's 'further' statement on coronavirus re Examinations
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-a-further-statement>
- Stay at home guidance for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>
- Guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK and protecting older people and vulnerable people at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

As I know you appreciate, we are working to incredibly tight timescales and are genuinely very grateful for your patience and understanding. We are already looking forward to when we will be able to re-open fully, and will let you know when this is via email, through our website (www.okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk), and through social media (Twitter: @OkehamptonCC, Facebook: @OkehamptonCollege).

Again, to reiterate, the advice and guidance provided by relevant government departments is under constant revision and is regularly updated. Please do continue to regularly monitor this advice, using the links I provide again above.

Thank you again very much for your continued support in these extraordinary times. If you have any further concerns that you feel we may be able to help with, please do not hesitate to contact us.

I am aware that we have sent a lot of information this week in a very short period of time we will continue to communicate regularly with you. Keep looking after yourselves, and each other.

Yours sincerely



Derrick Brett
Principal