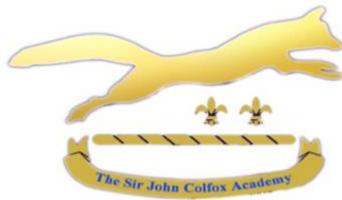


The Sir John Colfox Academy



Inspiring Learning, Achieving Excellence

Headteacher: Mr Adam Shelley MEd, BSc Hons, PGCE, NQFH

Friday 20 March 2020

Dear Parents

As previously shared, schools have been directed to close from 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).

I am writing to confirm that at ten past midnight today, the UK Government issued the following guidance -

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

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 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.*

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors listed below ([in the 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>

We have sent a text message asking you to let us know if you are a key worker and intend to send your child into school. Please ensure you advise us so that I have enough staff in place to supervise them.

As already said, if possible, you should even if you do fall into these categories consider keeping your child at home. We are lucky in secondary schools that many students particularly in KS4 and 5 can remain at home even if parents are working.

I wanted to give you information about what the school will be like for those students who are in as it will be a very different experience from how it currently is.

- All doors will remain shut, students who are coming in will enter through the front door by reception at 8.15am and go to the hall where a register will be taken.
- They will then be directed to an ICT suite where a member of staff will supervise them.
- They will work on the same assignments as those working from home.
- We will supervise them at breaks and lunchtimes but they will remain indoors to avoid coming into any contact with others. We will programme in some exercise during the week.
- They will then leave the building at 3.30pm as a normal school day
- The canteen will serve food at break and lunch times as well as breakfast club at the moment, or students can bring in a packed lunch.
- Students do not need to wear school uniform

We have been told that school transport will run on Monday but have no further information about the rest of the week, or beyond. If you have concerns then please contact Dorset Council. We have no means to get students here or home.

Even if you are a keyworker and someone becomes ill with the coronavirus symptoms in your household you must not send your child in. You should all self-isolate for 14 days and only contact the NHS if symptoms become severe. If your child becomes ill while they are under our care we will isolate them and contact you to pick them up. We need to protect all those students and staff who are here.

We are open for these students on reduced staffing, many staff will be working from home either setting work for students, planning or developing further resources for our students who are at home. They are at home because they have underlying medical conditions or live in a household with

someone who does. I have, therefore, asked them to stay at home so they can be safe. We are all vulnerable to this terrible virus and we want to keep as many staff available to support your daughters and sons in school as much as possible.

The number of staff who are coming in during this period are likely to reduce over time as the virus takes hold of the country. These staff may become infected so while we will keep supporting those who are keeping the country going and helping those who need extra support due to this devastating virus we might need to change how the school operates during this time. I will of course keep you informed.

We currently have masks and gloves on order to use when needed to protect our staff from this virus, but do not intend to use these yet. The school will continue to get cleaned each day and we have ordered more sanitiser.

Can I please just make it clear that we are here to support the students of keyworkers, to all other students we are closed. No one else will be allowed to enter the building or have access to staff members face to face as we need to protect them from risk of infection.

Reception will be shut – we will check the answer machine and the office email address and we will respond when we can but the limited staffing capacity means that we will prioritise those in school.

I would like to thank parents and students for the way you have all responded to this ever changing global pandemic. We are currently supporting all those students in our community and will continue to do so where we can.

I also would like to thank those parents who have sent in food. We have created food boxes and sent a food bank voucher home. These are valid whilst the school is shut so those families who need that support can get it. For those on free school meals we have sent you a £10 Morrisons voucher so students can get some lunch next week, this is a short term measure that I have put in to place so no child goes hungry while the Government decide how they can distribute school meals to these students in the future.

As a final note we will get through this and the Bridport community will pull together as it is already doing to help those that need support. I want to wish you all well over the following weeks and months until we get back to normal.

Keep yourselves and your family's safe, at this time, as we think of those who are suffering with this terrible virus. It is going to get worse before it gets better but it will get better.

I will keep in contact and cannot wait to send you the letter that says we are fully open again.

Thinking of you all and wishing you well at this difficult time.

Yours sincerely



Adam Shelley
Headteacher