

Friday 20th March 2020.

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you know, the Government has said that schools must close from this Friday, March 20th, but that they will open to support vulnerable students and those of certain key workers (see full details below).

The Government guidance emphasises that **parents should keep children at home wherever possible** and that the fewer children making the journey to school and the fewer children in educational setting, the lower the risk of the virus spreading. We all need to work together to try and stem the spread of the virus.

However, there are two categories of children for whom the school will continue to provide care at this time:

- 1. Children who are vulnerable:** Full details of which children are covered are set out below.
- 2. Children whose parents are key workers and who meet ALL the following conditions:**
 - The parent must be in a critical role based on government advice - full details of these critical roles are below; **and**
 - The parent must have had confirmation from their employer that their specific role is necessary for the continuation of essential public service; **and**
 - Their child cannot otherwise be cared for safely at home.

If your children fall into either of the above two categories, please confirm by replying to the text message sent to all parents by Monday 23rd March 2020 otherwise we cannot guarantee a place for your child

Once you have let us know that you need to send your child to school, we will send you a form to complete. If you are an essential key worker, you will be asked to confirm your role, that you are required by your employer and that your child cannot be cared for safely at home.

This is such a fast-changing situation, so we will ask parents on a weekly basis to re-confirm you want to send your child into school for what we are calling our 'Community Classrooms.'

Exams

Exams are cancelled in May and June and the Secretary of State for Education says he will provide further information soon for students who are impacted. As soon as we have this information, we will share it with you.

Free school meals

Children who qualify for Free Schools Meals will be provided with sandwiches on Monday 23rd March and Tuesday 24th March 2020, to be collected between 11.30-12.30pm on Monday 23rd March for both days. After that, Vouchers will be sent to all FSM families. A text has been sent to all families regarding this.

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Learning at home

It is not possible to fully replicate the educational experience at home; however, we have been working hard for several weeks to put in place contingency plans to ensure students can still access work and teachers are able to support their learning.

Work packs and home study guidelines have already been issued to all pupils. Further Distance Learning work will be available on our school website www.arkkingsacademy.org and will be updated weekly. If you require a paper copy of this weekly work, please contact the school office on 0121 459 4451.

All secondary students have also been issued with a school e-mail account, which they can use to access the online resources and lessons that their teachers will prepare for them each week. Please ensure that your child completes the work set for them every day. We will keep you updated through our website, texts, letters and Twitter.

While schools are closed, we should all continue to follow health guidance.

Find out how to protect yourself here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

For further information on the government response, please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

We will continue to update you on any developments via letters, text and with regular updates on the school website.

This is an unsettling and disruptive time for everyone and we will work together as a school and local community to face the challenging times ahead. Thank you for your support and understanding during these exceptional circumstances. If we can do anything more to help your family, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Government Guidance on Vulnerable Children

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](#).

Government Guidance on Key Workers

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

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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 arm's 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 their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service.

Yours sincerely,



Roger Punton
Principal