



20 March 2020

Dear Parent/carer,

Following the latest advice from the government I am writing to update you but also to express my concern that it is going to be a real struggle for us to maintain the level of child care service which the government has requested. There are already many schools which do not have the capacity and are going to have to remain closed. Therefore we will do our very best but I will need to continue to monitor the situation and only provide the childcare service if it is safe to do so.

*This is the request from DFE:*

***Will it be mandatory for all schools, colleges and registered childcare providers to remain open in some form?***

*We are asking schools, colleges, nurseries, childminders and other registered childcare settings to remain open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children where they can.*

*We understand that **some may be unable to do so** especially if they are experiencing severe staff shortages. We will work with local areas to use neighbouring schools, colleges and childcare providers to continue to support vulnerable children and children of critical workers.*

Therefore we will do our best to operate a childcare service at school from 8.50am to 3.15pm. A school lunch (providing we have the provisions) will be provided for those children entitled to a free school meal and Reception, Year 1 and 2 pupils. If possible all other children will need to bring a packed lunch please – however we will endeavour to provide a school lunch at the usual cost but the School Grid ordering system will not be available.

The information you require to determine if you are eligible to be prioritised to access this childcare is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

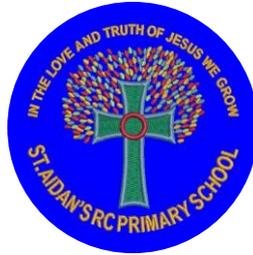
Please read carefully however especially bear in mind the following:

As a country, we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. That is why the government has given clear guidance on self-isolation, household isolation and social distancing. And the most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. If children can stay safely at home, **they should**, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.

**That is why the government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.**

NORTHUMBERLAND  
COUNTY COUNCIL

Samantha Leslie  
Headteacher



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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.

Therefore if your child is eligible he/she **should only** attend our childcare provision on the days that you cannot safely care for him/her at home.

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors and you **cannot keep your child safe at home** then your children will be **prioritised** for education provision.

Please check the list at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision> to check to see if we can prioritise your child for childcare. Initially the advice we were given was that it needed to be both parent/carers who were critical workers but the DFE have now stated it is at least one. If parent/carers think that their role falls within the critical categories they should confirm with their employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service.

Please bear in mind that demand may mean that you will be offered childcare at an alternative education provision.

If you haven't already got in touch to let us know that you think you may be a critical worker then please email us at [admin@st-aidans.northumberland.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-aidans.northumberland.sch.uk).

We will then be in touch as soon as we can to establish exactly which days your employer has confirmed you need to work if you cannot safely care for your children at home.

I am sure you appreciate that this is a difficult time and that as a school we want to everything we can to support parent/carers and provide this service, but I also need to take care of my amazing staff team and families as well.

Thank you again for your support and understanding.

A small rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'S. Leslie'.

Samantha Leslie

Head teacher