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# NORTHUMBERLAND County Council

Longhorsley St Helen's  
C of E Aided First School  
Drummonds Close  
Longhorsley  
MORPETH  
Northumberland  
NE65 8UT



Whalton C of E Aided Primary School  
Whalton  
MORPETH  
Northumberland  
NE61 3XH

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20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Firstly, thank you all so much for completing the google form yesterday with the information we so desperately needed to forward plan in these uncertain times. As you are aware, schools will close today for the vast majority of children but many will remain open for the children of key workers, those children with an EHCP and those children who have a social worker.

Last night clarification was received for schools on how they should proceed over the forthcoming weeks/months. The guidance from the Government is clear, "If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading... 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. **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.**"

Clarity was also given on the categories of key workers. This can be found at

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

list of questions and answers for parents can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

This is to let you know that after a full risk assessment of both schools across The Federation, and with the agreement of the Chair of Governors, we have made the decision to keep Longhorsley C of E First School open for the key groups of children from **both** schools but will be closing Whalton C of E Primary school to pupils. This has been based on:

- The number of key workers who need places for their children at each school
- The current staffing levels to care for pupils safely
- The capacity to keep staffing at the appropriate and safe level in the event of staff illness/self-isolation over an unknown period of time
- Size and capacity of each school to be able to offer places



For those children coming from Whalton, they will get to be with their Federation buddies, be greeted by their Whalton teachers and have lots more space in their new classrooms and playground to have fun, to learn and to make more friends too. All of the Federation Staff will do everything possible to make all children feel happy and settled.

The provision at this time will be very much based on care. All children from Whalton will be provided with a hot school dinner. Longhorsley children will be able to have their usual dinner choice, however, if they would like a dinner, this can be catered for at a cost of £2.20, paid in advance on Gateway. We are currently looking at arrangements to see if the Local Authority can help with transport for Whalton children.

All other children from both schools will need to stay at home, so we ask that you do not send your child into school from Monday onwards. Those of you who have said that your child needs a school place, as you are a key worker, we have e-mailed out a form for you to indicate which days you would need a place for your child. We look forward to welcoming you and your child/ren to school next week. We need to ensure that we keep to the latest government scientific advice which has been set by the government as a maximum of 20% of the school population. Using the information provided by yourselves yesterday, we are already at 20% combining both school rolls.

We will be opening Longhorsley earlier from 8.30am and children can be dropped off between then and 8.55am. Registers will be taken as normal and attendance monitored as part of safeguarding so please do ring school if your child is not coming in or are ill, so we know that they are safe. We are happy for you to let us know on a weekly basis which days your children will be in school via the google form if this is needed.

We will continue to help you and your children with their learning and many of you will have already received packs, school 360 passwords, resources and exercise books for your children to use at home, as well as a vast array of online resources and websites on our school websites under 'working from home' tab. Homework will be set on a daily/weekly basis by our teachers and we would like all children to log on and complete their school 360 activities as often as they can, daily would be great but at least weekly.

Please also encourage your children to email their teachers, using their 360 e-mail address, on a weekly basis to share what they have been getting up to and have enjoyed most; it will be lovely to hear from your children!

For our Early Years' children, please log in to Tapestry and under your child's name with 'school closure' there is an opportunity for you to write in there and have a dialogue between yourselves and your class teacher and child. Staff will be sure to reply every week as part of their pastoral care. I would like to thank all of the staff who have worked tirelessly to get everything ready for your children and please can we remember that they all have families too.

No after school clubs will be running, however, Fiona and her team at Longhorsley Village playgroup/wraparound care is opening from Monday every day from 7.30am until 6:00pm. You can contact Fiona on 07933 721685 or email [longhorslevillageplaygroup@yahoo.com](mailto:longhorslevillageplaygroup@yahoo.com) to reserve a place.

If your child usually receives free school meals, we will be sending you supermarket vouchers initially and be in touch with more information about how we will continue to provide this, with support from a scheme that the government has just announced.

We understand that this latest news will have an impact on you and your family but we will continue to keep in touch with any updates as the situation develops.

If you want to get in touch to share any concerns, or have any questions, please do not hesitate to do so via [longhorsleyadmin@fedlongwhaltschools.uk](mailto:longhorsleyadmin@fedlongwhaltschools.uk) or by ringing 01670 788316. We are here to listen and support, as and when you need us.

And remember: if you or your child feels ill and you want to know what to do next, please use the NHS 111 online.

Thank you again for your continued support; as we continue to Aspire, Believe and Achieve to do the very best for your children under very difficult circumstances, whether they be at home or with us in school. I am very grateful for the helpful and measured approach that our families and our staff are showing to the international challenge that coronavirus brings and we will keep you updated.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you all.

Kindest regards,

Mrs Brannen and all of the Federation Staff and Governors.

