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Dear Parents,

It is important that you fully understand the change of stance from the Education Secretary that schools are now moving from an education focus to a care focus. As of the end of today, school as you know it will be closed. We will open to provide childcare for the children of key workers only.

The government made the following guidance available to schools late last night:

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.**

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](#).

We know that schools will also want to support other children facing social difficulties and we will support head teachers to do so.

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:

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

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 arms 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, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service.

Looking at the list, it is clear the majority of our families would qualify under some sections. However, the government have made it clear schools are closed and that the child care arrangements are only if absolutely essential '**And every child who can be safely cared for at home should be**' We therefore need you to think really carefully about whether you actually need to send your child into school.

It is also important that you fully understand the change of stance from the Education Secretary that schools are now moving from an education focus to a care focus. To remain open, we will be doing so because of the fantastic team we have here at Bury and that will mean there are occasions when a teacher will not be present. We will only be able to open as long as we have a minimum of two staff with the children and an additional staff member available for emergencies. One of the staff will be first aid trained and a safeguarding lead must be available. If we cannot manage that then we will have to close for the safety of everyone.

If any child or family member exhibits a high temperature or a continuous cough they should self-isolate, so they do not spread the virus further. If we are in any doubt we will be sending the child home.

This definition of '*critical key workers*' may change and we will contact you as soon as we have any more information.

If you are one of these key workers and need us to provide your childcare arrangements from 8:40am to 3:15pm, please can you email the school office@bury.school stating your category as well as your job title **by 12pm Friday 20th March 2020**. Also please can you indicate if you would like to send your child to school on Monday 23rd March 2020. We will advise you if you are entitled to send your child to school later today.

In addition, If your child has an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan) and you would like them to come to school, please can you email our school office at office@bury.school **by 12pm Friday 20th March 2020**, so we can make provision for your child.



In order to plan further ahead, we also need to know if you require childcare over the Easter Holidays, once again with the caveat 'And every child who can be safely cared for at home should be'

Information required by 12pm:

- **Child's name**
- **Parent's category and job title (only one parent [of two-parent families] needs to be listed)**
- **Reason why your child/ren cannot be safely cared for at home**
- **Specific days of the week (Monday – Friday) the childcare is required**
- **Whether you require childcare over the Easter Holiday (again stating the specific days needed) At present I cannot guarantee we will be able to facilitate this and will let you know once we ascertain the level of need and the staff capacity**

I realise this is a lot of information required in a very short time frame and information could of course change again in future. It is possible the list of key workers will change over time and we will update you as soon as we receive any new information.

It is an incredibly challenging time for everyone at present. Please do speak to us if there is anything else we can do. As I said yesterday, in this challenging time we will of course do all we can to provide a service for all children of key worker families, if you decide that sending your child/ren to school is what you need to keep you, them and the wider community safe at this time.

Yours sincerely,

T Moore

Headteacher