

Dear Parents/Carers,

Friday 20th March 2020

Ref: Supporting Children of Key Workers in Primary School

The Primary School will close today Friday 20th March. It will remain closed to all children and staff except Leadership Team on Monday as we prepare for the incoming priority children. However, we will reopen with skeleton staff on Tuesday 24th March to support identified Key Workers. It is important to note **this is not a statutory requirement – schools are being asked to help as part of a national response.**

The recent medical advice on how to reduce the risk of and 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. Children **MUST** be looked after at **HOME** where this is **AT ALL POSSIBLE** – our school facility is a **SERVICE OF LAST RESORT**. This is to protect our children and to ensure that the maximum possible number of Key Workers are able to go to work to provide all of us with the essential services that we need.

Many principals from the Derry/Londonderry Principals' Association have agreed to follow a coordinated response to ensure that we support the children of key workers in a similar way across our schools. We wish to express our gratitude to all of the essential key workers and commend you on the fantastic job that you are doing, your commitment and dedication is very much appreciated. Some schools may be in a position to provide more support, depending on the numbers of staff still available to work.

It is vitally important that schools are aware how many children of key workers will be attending school on Tuesday morning. Schools will have a limited capacity due to social distancing regulations and a reduced workforce.

With this in mind, before you apply for a school place for your child (ren) please consider:

- 1) Your work role, days and hours of supervision required
- 2) Do you have a partner, another family member or safe and trusted friend who can look after your child?
- 3) Your partner or family member is working from home and is therefore considered to be able to provide childcare.

If you can make any alternative arrangements, we would ask that you consider doing so. This is to try and limit the number of children and adults together in a small space in line with recent social distancing guidance. Only children with both parents working as key workers and both parents out at work at the same time should consider attending school. In single families, the individual parent must be the Key Worker.

Please refer to the attached list of specific job titles within each sector to check if you are:

- A single parent identified as a key worker
- **Both parents identified as key workers**
- If both parents are key workers, consider your roles, days and hours of work pattern. One parent might be at home during school hours on various days.

Please contact the school by completing [this survey](#) before 6:00 p.m. on Saturday 21st March to request a place for your child/ren. **We all have a duty to each other to use this facility responsibly.** If the demand for places at school exceeds the available capacity, we may require parents to provide an official letter from their employer confirming their key worker status. In addition, where capacity is becoming exhausted, we may have no option but to require confirmed key workers to sign a daily declaration that they have no one at home on that day to look after their children.

Please note that this is only a request you should not bring your child to school until notified by the school that there is a place available. **Only families with an offer of a place should attend the school and they should only do this when directed to by the school.**

Please bear in mind schools can only offer places based on their capacity and have to take into careful consideration the safety and wellbeing of all the staff and pupils. This may mean schools have to **prioritise according to need and availability of staff i.e. not accept the children of every key worker on the Ministers list.**

Schools will not be able to operate a 'normal' school day. Many of our schools are already operating with a significant reduction in staffing and this will probably continue to get worse over time.

Please be advised that schools will be performing childcare duties, rather than teaching, as not all teachers are currently available to teach specific year groups and teachers must also be available to provide online / remote learning. It may not be your child's year group teacher working on a particular day. We would ask that you pay attention to the above points before applying for a place for your child/ren.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Duddy

Appendix 1

"Key Worker" categories:

- **Health and Social Care:** Doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, home carers
- **Education and childcare:** Nursery and teaching staff, social workers and specialist education professionals
- **Public safety and national security:** Civilians and officers in the police, Fire and Rescue Service, prison service and other national security roles
- **Transport:** Those keeping air, water, road and rail transport modes operating
- **Utilities and Communication:** Staff needed for oil, gas, electricity and water (including sewage) and primary industry supplies; key staff in telecommunications, post and delivery, services and waste disposal
- **Food and other necessary goods:** Those involved in food production, processing, distribution and sale, and those essential to the provision of other key goods (e.g hygiene, medical)
- **Other workers** essential to delivering key public services
- **Key national and local government staff** including administrative occupations

Appendix 2

Questions for Key worker parents:

Have you read carefully all of the information above?

Are you a key worker?

What category of key worker ?

Have you already withdrawn your child for H&S reasons?

Is your family socially isolating?

Is any member of your family exhibiting any symptoms of cough or temperature?

Does your child have underlying health issues?

Do you have family members at home with underlying health issues?

Are you clear that children exhibiting symptoms must be picked up immediately?

Are you clear that that Children will be socially distanced in school?