

20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents/carers,

Please ensure that you read the following email all the way through, there are some vital **'Actions for Parents'** further down that we need a rapid response to. We are aware this is short notice, but we are responding to Government advice as it becomes available.

First of all a reminder that, for the vast majority of children, **all schools will be closed as of the end of the school day today (Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March)** until further notice.

Separate emails, supplementing those you would already have received will be sent out regarding learning at home and provision for the vast majority of pupils who will not be in school for the time-being, but this email is to let parents know about the plans we have to provide for the children of 'key workers' and those pupils that are classed as most vulnerable.

**Plans for Childcare Provision:**

Following the latest advice from the Government and Local Authority, who will be leading operations across districts throughout Kent, we can confirm that Christ Church will remain open for eligible children up until 4.30pm on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

- From Monday (March 23<sup>rd</sup>) there will be an offer of childcare from 7.45am to 4.30pm for children who need it on any given day (see below for a definition of 'need' and for children who are eligible);
- It is anticipated that beyond this date, additional provision could be relocated to 'skeleton schools', organised by the Local Authority at centrally located 'hubs'. This provision could extend through the existing Easter break and into what would have been Term 5.
- Dependent upon staff availability we may not be providing the normal pupil:staff ratios, but we will ensure that all provision is fully risk-assessed to ensure a safe environment for all children at all times;
- This will not be a 'drop-in' facility. Children's attendance will only be by advance arrangement;
- A guiding principle will always be in place that the safety of the children is paramount, if we are unable to provide safe care for any given child due to staff shortages or lack of expertise, we will not be able to cater for that child until we can make it safe to do so;

Please note that this is not normal school provision – it is an emergency childcare initiative which will be safe and enjoyable for everyone involved, but will not be the equivalent of normal school provision in terms of the educational content of each day. Normal school uniform is not expected.

**Eligible Children:** The government has now provided a comprehensive list of 'Key Workers' within the information to be found at the following

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



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Please note that the guidance refers to 'essential' workers for many of the groups. As an example, local NHS trusts have already identified groups of workers who can work from home, so simply working for the NHS does not qualify a family for these arrangements.

The guidance also clarifies 'vulnerable children' as 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](#)." Parents of these children will already have spoken to or have a voicemail message left by Miss Holder by the time this email has been sent. If you have not been contacted it is because the information we hold in school does not reflect the above designation.

If you believe that your child is not covered by the 'vulnerable' category above, but that they will need extra support beyond what you can provide at home, please contact Miss Holder [jholder@christ-church-ramsgate.kent.sch.uk](mailto:jholder@christ-church-ramsgate.kent.sch.uk) or phone 01843 593350 as soon as possible.

Please also note the guiding principles within the information:

1. **The most important aspect and the main government strategy in containing the spread of Covid 19 is 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.

In order to best protect both children and staff during this crisis, we will be asking that childcare is requested only where there is a 'need'. Although having one 'critical worker' in the household may qualify your child for this provision, we would expect that if there is a non-critical worker in the home capable of basic childcare during the day that care is first obtained here. This guiding principle should be the starting point for families. The latest guidance reaffirms this stance with the following statement:

**"Many parents working in these critical sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be."**

We would ask that all families consider the impact on themselves, their families and others in terms of the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) before requesting childcare.



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\*\*\*\***Action for Parents**\*\*\*\*

- If you haven't already, please inform school if you believe that you qualify for the childcare arrangements **AND** whether you think that you may need to use them.
- **Whether you have already been in touch or not, please contact us by 4.30pm today (Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March) to let us know if you will require childcare on either Monday or Tuesday of next week (23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> March) and what hours you will need that for so that we can plan staff arrangements accordingly.** Once we have everything in place for Monday, we will start gathering information for Wednesday onwards;
- If you are booking provision, please let us know if your child will need a school dinner. We will aim to provide a basic breakfast for those arriving prior to 9am and snacks for those staying beyond 3.30pm. We expect normal arrangements for paid/free school meals to be in place.

**Free School Meals:** There will be a number of children who are entitled to a free school meal who are not eligible for the childcare arrangements. There is work underway for a national voucher scheme for children whilst they are off school, but whilst this is being put in place, Caterlink, our school meal provider, has agreed to produce packed lunches for those children eligible for free school meals, but not eligible to attend school. If you wish to take up this offer, meals would need to be ordered by Midday the day before collection. Collection would be from the school office and due to limited staffing only between 10.00am and 11.00am. This provision would only be available up until and including the 1<sup>st</sup> April.

**It is vital that you inform us if you to collect a free school meal as soon as possible.**

We appreciate that there is a lot of information to digest in this email, so please ask any questions that you might have.

Kind regards,

N. Tucker

Mr Neil Tucker  
Headteacher



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