

Friday 20th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

We write again to update you on the plans that have been made so far to manage school closures.

As mentioned in our earlier email, following Government announcements yesterday, all schools will close for the foreseeable future for the vast majority of pupils at the end of the school day (Friday 20th March).

As a country, we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The Government has given clear guidance on [self-isolation](#), [household isolation](#) and [social distancing](#). 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 must, 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 to provide childcare only for those children who absolutely need to attend.

**It is important to highlight that 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 childcare 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.

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## Alumnis Multi-Academy Trust

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**Zoe Batten**  
Chief Executive Officer

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Please note that the schools will be open for childcare purposes only and will not be in a position to offer the national curriculum that would normally be taught in school.

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 childcare 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.

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 childcare 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 parents think they fall within the critical categories listed 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.

Please note: It is not compulsory for 'Key Worker' children to access this service, provision is offered on a voluntary basis and we need to ensure that we keep school staff safe as well as the children attending, therefore social distancing and maintaining low numbers in school will remain a priority for the ongoing safety of all.

If you believe you fit into one of the above categories and will require this provision, please complete the Google Form which will be sent out to you in a further communication. Please ensure that you have completed this form by **6pm on Saturday 21st March** to enable us to plan our staffing models for next week.

We appreciate that 'Key Worker' parents may have differing requirements of the service day by day or week to week and we will aim to accommodate this, wherever possible, however please be aware that due to staffing pressures in our schools currently, we will not be able to offer any wrap around care facilities or after school clubs that would normally be on offer. **The service will be open from 9-3:30 and all parents will need to provide a packed lunch to their children.**

Our vulnerable pupils are already known to the schools and school staff will be in contact to discuss future school attendance. This group of pupils includes anyone who has:

- An education health care plan (who do not have an underlying health condition, which means school attendance is not advisable);
- An allocated social worker
- 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](#).

Children accessing this service will need to be registered on a daily basis in line with our usual safeguarding routines and we will be asking parents to let us know if their child is absent for any reason. This will allow us to plan and maintain staffing levels and ensure safeguarding requirements are met. We will confirm our booking arrangements in further communications to you, once we have established the numbers or families that this service is essential for.

If your child's school is closed due to staff illness, then please [contact your local authority](#), who will seek to redirect you to a local school in your area that your child, or children, can attend.

### **Provision of food for children entitled to free school meals (FSM)**

We are currently making plans for children currently in receipt of free school meals. It is likely that supermarket vouchers will be provided to these families, or a food hamper, where schools contract out to catering companies such as Devon Norse. We hope this will be very supportive of families. Further details will be provided in due course.

Please note that ALL families eligible to access school provision, (including those with the free school meals entitlement) will need to provide a packed lunch on a daily basis. The schools will not have the ability to cook hot meals on site or to prepare food.

The schools will not be able to cater for any children that currently receive universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) that are usually on offer to all Reception, and Key Stage One children.

### **Continuation of learning**

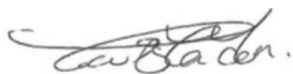
For families whose children will be receiving their education from home, further correspondence will follow from your child's school directing you to suggested learning activities. We will be very mindful to ensure that these activities are parent and family friendly. There will be an important focus on play, creativity, fun, well-being and exercise.

Thank you for your continued support and patience while we continue to work together to respond to this national effort to support our country's efforts to minimise the spread of the coronavirus.

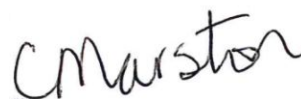
Yours faithfully,



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