

19<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Ms J Palmer BSc, MA, MA, NPQH  
Principal

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing again in an effort to have a shared understanding of the current situation in relation to schools and the Coronavirus.

Although details from the Department for Education are not yet totally clear, I have been making every effort to gather as much information as possible to share with you and school staff. I am in frequent contact with colleague special school Headteachers and have studied information from the following:

- Special Schools' Voice
- Association of School and College Leaders
- National Association of Headteachers
- Kent Special Education Needs Trust
- Confederation of School Trusts
- Department for Education

I am sure will have heard in the news that all schools in England will be closing tomorrow, however there are some exceptions to this directive. The exceptions relate to children of 'key workers' and 'vulnerable children' and the definition for both of these terms will soon be further clarified.

I must emphasise that not all children and young people who have an Education, Health and Care Plan will be expected to attend school from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. Please understand that we are operating with a 30% reduction in staff and this is likely to increase dramatically. Additionally, decreased staffing levels could affect the various agencies that we work with and services we employ. It is also important to note that we have had numerous staff and pupils who have exhibited symptoms of the Coronavirus and are now self-isolating.

Please be reminded that the latest guidance states that there are some groups of people who may be more at risk of serious illness if they catch Coronavirus. This group has been defined as those suffering from a chronic illness and underlying health conditions and these include:

- Long term respiratory diseases such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), bronchitis
- Chronic heart disease
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic liver disease such as hepatitis
- Chronic neurological conditions (such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy)
- Diabetes
- Spleen disorders
- Weakened immune system

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If your child has any of these conditions or if their health is compromised in any way, there is a much greater risk of infection and therefore home is the safest place. Keeping your child at home during this pandemic will not adversely affect your child's attendance record.

If you are a Key Worker and will need your child to attend school next week, we ask that you advise us by returning the short form that has been sent out today by the office. These forms will need to be returned at the latest by 11:00 a.m. tomorrow Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March. This will ensure that our planning for next week can be finalised.

For those parents of students who have already chosen to keep their child at home or if your child has been sent home by school staff due to potential virus symptoms, please continue to do so for the foreseeable future and continue to check the Parentmails we send and our website which will be updated regularly.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

Jill M. Palmer  
Principal  
Meadowfield School