



St Nicholas^{CE} First School

learning and believing, growing and achieving

St. Nicholas CE
First School, Codsall
Belvide Gardens
Codsall
Wolverhampton

Friday 20th March 2020

Dear Parents

This week has been a huge challenge for us all with uncertainty clouding every decision made and conversation held. I am pleased that the government have recognised the hard work that has been taking in place in schools and the dedication of those within them. I would personally like to thank our incredible team for their stalwart attitude this week in what has been an ever changing situation, whilst also commending those that have gone into self-isolation – a tough but responsible decision in the best interests of the community.

We have just heard that schools will close on Friday. I am grateful that a decision has finally been made as I am fully aware of the unrest it was causing however, there are now many complicated issues to address as a result of the announcement. Please understand that school headteachers and governors heard this for the first time when the announcement was made publicly and are now tasked this evening and over the coming days with creating a plan that will support all those in need.

I am fully aware that provision will need to be in place for children of key workers and those that really need us, whilst mindful that many of our team are parents themselves also. We will need to establish plans and contingencies to manage staffing levels, childcare provision, opening hours and health and safety in a completely new way of working. Whilst this evening this feels like a mammoth task, I know my staff will rise to this challenge as they always do.

As it stands school will be open to key workers and pupils with EHCPs or social worker involvement on Monday with a skeletal staff. Gavin Williamson MP has promised schools will be provided with a government list of such workers tomorrow and I believe it will encompass a range of workers beyond NHS workers in a bid to maintain the country's infrastructure. Please try not to contact school before this list is published as we cannot confirm whether:

- any particular role will qualify
- whether both parents need to qualify or just one for the child to be in school
- what operational hours will be

Tomorrow will be a very busy day within St Nicholas as work begins to put this in place, as well as plan for an extended school closure beyond the school Easter holidays. Please note this is anticipatory as we do not know when schools will re-open, however the cancellation of examinations may be a good indication that this will be a longer term closure. We remain committed to supporting our children and families remotely for as long as is needed and will always be contactable where we can. I will be looking at having two teams of staff running in tandem, the remote learning provision as well as the key worker childcare provision. I hope to flesh these plans out with my leadership team in the morning, where I hope we will be provided with more DFE instructions.

I appreciate the frustrations and worries of working parents that are not key workers who need to remain in work to maintain an income and provide other services which are important to the smooth running of daily life. As a teacher with a non-key worker partner, I too am anxious about his capacity to carry out his role as well as potentially manage our childcare should children of teachers not be classified as such or should the government require both parents to be key workers.

It has been suggested that this new provision will be in place throughout the traditional school Easter holiday period and we hope that this will go some way to support the NHS and other essential functions.

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We hope we have made sure we have kept you updated and we will continue to do so. We ensured that we were ready for home learning should this announcement come and we will make sure we are ready for the next stage. I apologise that we do not have all the answers yet, but I promise that they will come. Please allow me to make plans with the staff over the next couple of days and I will inform you of what we will be able to offer as soon as I can.

I have had messages from lots of parents in person and by email to inform me that families are self-isolating from today onwards. Please be assured I am not concerned about your child's attendance at school during this time and am fully supportive of this decision, as I have been of my staff. We have the privilege of forging relationships with many wonderful grandparents at drop off and collection from school, please do send them my best wishes as they begin to self-isolate and let them know that they are in our prayers and thoughts at this time.

Many of us will remember learning about WW2 at some point during our educational lives or through direct experience with family or community members who lived through it. Personally I found it fascinating, but also so unfathomable that it was hard to believe such times had ever existed. We can all think of examples that have been passed down through generations of the stoicism, heroism and community spirit and responsibility that this time has been known for. Let's manage this time calmly, kindly and take responsibility for doing what is right by our children, families and communities in whatever small way we can so that our children celebrate the work and spirit of their parents in years to come.

I want our children to be proud of us for the decisions we make for them today and for the way we manage this undoubtedly difficult time, please cherish them, acknowledge their uncertainty and anxieties, whilst balancing our own and if you need help, ask, that is what my staff and I are here for. I hope that by now, even our newest families to school know us well enough to know that we will do everything we can for the good of the children, parents and staff of St. Nics. I am most grateful of your support.

God bless you and your families, I am thinking of you all.

Yours sincerely,

Miss J Parker

Head Teacher