

15<sup>th</sup> June 2020

### **PROVISION FOR CHILDREN OF CRITICAL WORKERS**

Dear Parents and Friends of Castle Hill,

Following last week's announcement that schools will not be reopening to all pupils before the summer holidays, we have seen an increase in the number of requests for children to attend school. With the Government guidance being constantly revised (we are currently at approximately 150 changes since the end of March), we opened the school to children in YR, Y1 and Y6 as well as continuing to provide provision for children of critical workers and vulnerable families. As we are sure you can appreciate, this has involved a lot of planning, preparation of classrooms and deployment of staff in order to welcome these children in. We have been operating a waiting list and are now at maximum capacity.

Now that we are also seeing an increase in demand from critical workers, we are having to review our Pods and our ability to meet this, considering the space and staff we have available. The current Government guidance, which Hampshire County Council have advised on today, is that *"critical worker children and vulnerable children are first on the list."* We have been advised to warn parents that if we do not have space and staff available to open new Pods, then we may have to close one of the key year group Pods, starting with Y6, then Y1. It is also clear that as we bring more teachers into school, home learning will not be able to continue in its current format; this is an area we are currently reviewing.

In order for us to make plans to open up new Pods, we need to understand how many critical workers envisage needing a place for their child between now and the end of the summer term. The updated guidance defining critical workers who can access schools can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>.

Therefore, we are asking you to confirm your critical worker status and whether you will be requiring a place if your child is not currently in school. Please email your response to [admin@chjs.net](mailto:admin@chjs.net), by **12 noon on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June**.

For families who already have a place as critical workers or vulnerable children, we will need you to **confirm the days the place is required for**. This is to enable us to offer places to as many children as possible. We are sorry, but the days required will need to be fixed as we do not have the capacity to be as flexible as we would like.

If you are not a critical worker but have requested a space because your child is in one of the priority year groups, we are not in a position to offer a place at the moment. Your child will be put on the waiting list and once we know that we have spare capacity we will be in touch.

Please see Mr Martin's latest video which explains the complexities of expanding the Pods and the preparation work involved. There is also an individual video message for all classes throughout both schools on the website. It is worth noting that these are all one-take videos on a mobile phone, so please excuse the quality!

Your continued support at this time is much appreciated.

Kind regards,  
The Castle Hill Team