

20th March 2020

Dear parent/carer,

Thank you for your patience in these uncertain and challenging times. We have considered the latest Government guidance to schools, parents and carers in relation to the ongoing COVID-19 emergency and we are writing to give you clarity about what is to be expected from **Monday 23rd March 2020**.

Schools are being asked to continue to provide care 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.

Dowson will be closed at the end of today to most pupils to further limit the spread of COVID-19 and help to keep our community safe.

This means that **wherever possible, pupils should remain at home**. It is essential that we minimise contact over the coming weeks to give the country a better chance of controlling the virus. Schools across the country are under huge pressure as staff fall ill or need to self-isolate. This means that we will need to keep our operation under review, and it is possible that the school will need to close if we do not have enough staff to keep pupils safe. We will keep you updated in relation to this.

Please keep in mind that you should not rely on childcare from those in the stringent social distancing categories such as any friends or family members with the listed underlying health conditions or who are over the age of 70.

Critical Workers

The government recognises that some of your roles will be crucial in enabling the country to continue to function safely and effectively. If you work in one of the roles listed at the end of this letter, you will qualify as a critical worker.

Children with at least one parent or carer who are identified as critical workers by the government can send their children to school **if required**.

However, this does not mean you should automatically send your child to school.

Remember, our aim is to minimise contact and limit the spread of the virus so that there is less chance of you or your child being infected. **If you are a critical worker and can keep your child at home in any way, then it is important you do so.**

If you feel you qualify as a critical worker and wish your child to attend school, because you have **no other means for safe childcare** under the guidance, we ask that you provide proof of employment (and shift pattern where appropriate). We will be sending out an online survey for you to register your needs and proof later today. Please complete this as soon as possible so that we can begin to organise appropriate staffing.

Please be aware that we may need to check the provenance of this information.

For critical workers who work part time, we would expect your child to attend school on a part time basis. Again, we would ask that you share with us details of your hours of work should you wish your child to attend school.

Vulnerable pupils. A child is counted as vulnerable if they have a social worker or have an education, health and care plan (EHCP). **We will expect vulnerable pupils to attend school as normal.**

We recognise that this will mean that the majority of our pupils will not be attending school from Monday 23rd March until further notice. Please ensure that children are not mixing socially during their time away from school in a way that can continue to spread the virus.

We hope this gives you more clarity when making your decision around whether your child can or should be attending school on Monday.

We will maintain regular contact with you to keep you updated of any further information. This will include details around school meals, safeguarding arrangements and the curriculum we will provide for those pupils who will be attending school.

We recognise the challenges that the virus presents to us all and look forward to working together to reduce the risks to our children and families.

Yours faithfully

Darren Holmes
Chief Executive of the Enquire Learning Trust

Kathryn Thornburn
Principal Dowson Academy

Definition of Critical Workers

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