

The Federation of Boldmere Schools

Cofield Road · Sutton Coldfield · B73 5SD

Our Vision: The Federation of Boldmere Schools empowers all children to embrace learning; achieve their personal best; and build their social, emotional and physical wellbeing.

5th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

School Closures – COVID-19.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our wonderful Boldmere community. I am incredibly grateful for the support and kind words that have been shared during these very challenging times. Managing the spread of coronavirus and the ongoing challenges that it brings on a day to day basis has certainly been relentless.

As we find ourselves, yet again at a time of National Lockdown, I want to reassure you that we are working very hard to support the education of our pupils through this difficult time. Due to the very late announcement by the government last night, we have chosen to use today to ascertain further information regarding potential pupil numbers in order to organise staffing and confirm remote learning provision.

Following the announcement last night, you will now all be aware that schools across England have been instructed to close from today. The announcement indicated that this arrangement would be in place until February half term, but I am sure that over the coming days and weeks we will learn more about the length of this lockdown.

I would like to reiterate that the guidance is not statutory and each individual school will be using the guidance to inform parents of decisions in relation to school closures. As per the government guidance, we will continue to provide provision on site for children of parents/carers who are categorised as ‘critical workers’ and for ‘vulnerable children’ from Wednesday 6th January as defined by government, who state:

‘The principle is that if children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading. The Government is asking parents to keep their children at home wherever possible- schools will remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.’

‘If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be as 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.’

The guidance states that we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of the COVID-19. That is why the government has given clear guidance on self-isolation, household isolation and social distancing. Hence, parents have been asked to keep children at home.

It is absolutely essential to understand that the school is **CLOSED FROM TODAY**. It is only open for those children who absolutely need to attend. We need to ensure that we are as operational as we can be whilst maintaining the safety of children and staff at all times. This is proving to be very challenging indeed! Any decision to partially close or fully close still lies with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors, but with your help, we hope to stay open for those identified critical workers who need our services to fight this virus.

We are being asked to provide school places for a limited number of children, so it is definitely not business as usual. The advice is clear **STAY AT HOME** where possible. We are aware that the guidance has stipulated that children with at least one parent or carer, who are identified as critical workers by the government, can send their child to school if required. However, in order for Boldmere to be operational as in the previous lockdown in March 2020, we are insisting that both parents need to be identified as a critical worker in order for us to effectively deliver expected provision in school. This decision has certainly been challenging to make, but this virus should not be taken lightly, **IT KILLS** and I have to think about the health care and well-being of all at school whilst we remain open for those who need us. This is non-negotiable.

Parents/carers whose work is identified as being critical to the COVID-19 response has been identified in the guidance. Please visit the guidance to see if **both parents** (for couples) fall into these categories listed. If a single parent family, the critical worker guidance obviously only applies to you.

It must be stressed that the school is unable to provide provision beyond the identified critical worker role. When planning our provision, parents/carers will be asked to provide documentary proof of their employment. Please ensure that you have this available as and when it will be required.

If you are an identified critical worker **and have no other alternative childcare provision**, then we would ask you to e-mail us by using: contact@boldmere.bham.sch.uk and please complete and submit your email request for a place using the attached parent/carer declaration form.

Please submit the above information by 1:00 pm today, so that we can plan effective provision to ensure all children who fulfil our requirements to attend school, do so safely. We will be making the decision in relation to who attends school. If requests for places are submitted after the deadline, I am afraid these will not be considered, due to the timescales and pressures that we are working under. We will be contacting you at some point this afternoon to confirm your request for a place in school. Our decision is final as it will be based upon the health, safety and operational capacity that we have in school.

Obviously your co-operation is greatly appreciated and any email requests received requesting provision will be responded to by today, so you are aware of provision in school. If you do not require provision do not email us. Think carefully about your child coming to school please. For those that attend we will do our utmost to ensure provision is the best it can be. Once we know numbers of requests for places, further information on school meals etc will be provided. This will include provision for the on coming weeks which will be appraised and communicated to those critical workers and parents/carers of vulnerable children requiring school provision over the lockdown period.

Once again thanks for all your understanding, support and continued patience. **KEEP SAFE and STAY AT HOME** where possible.

Yours sincerely

C Glasgow
Executive Head

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