



20th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have been notified that the guidance the Local Authority agreed yesterday with the Department for Education around support for parents from Monday onwards, has been superseded and this letter outlines the current position (March 20th am).

Schools cannot be required to stay open where it is logistically impossible in terms of staffing and pupil numbers. Where a school is unable to provide safe provision for pupil numbers, those children who fall into the category of support will likely need to use a different school within the locality or staff from other settings may be asked to come and support Rackham. This is not yet known and the Local Authority are awaiting school responses regarding staff and pupil numbers to see where and how they can logistically ensure all pupils within county are catered for.

With this in mind, and the fact that our Rackham workforce remains critically low (4 teaching staff) please do NOT consider it essential for your child to return to school if you are a key worker. Wherever possible, it is essential that you consider keeping them at home. It is only if you are rendered unable to provide a vital service to the nation when your children are at home that you should consider sending them into school. **It is critical that all parents in the Rackham community understand the significance of this request. Where one parent is a Key Worker and the other is not, the second parent should be the first port of call for caring at home; their duties of work are not sufficient reason to send their child to school.**

Coupled with this, the most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 remains clear. Social distancing is paramount. Although children are not thought to be as at risk when they contract the disease, the role they may play in spreading of the disease it is not yet known. This is a very moot point for all those parents and carers who may have underlying health conditions.

The government have requested these key principles are followed:

1. Keep children at home if it is **at all** possible for children to remain safe doing so.
2. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.

The Government has requested that all schools provide **optional** care for a **limited number of children**.

The list of roles which qualify as key workers is vast. If all parents who have a role on this list send their children in to school, it is very likely we will have more children in school than we currently do, and our situation in school is already critical in terms of safe staff:pupil ratios. If your job is on this list, it does not mean you **have** to send your child in, nor does it mean you should if you or your partner are able to keep them at home. It is so important that parents consider the wider picture here and do not think solely about what makes their life easier at home. Sending pupils into school who do not need to be could mean making life considerably harder for those parents who really DO need their child in school so they can work at saving lives and keeping our nation afloat.

If you do not intend to send your child into school, please do NOT fill this form in and **do not** email the office to tell us. We appreciate things are uncertain and lonely for you all at present and we will resume regular contact with you all in due course but for now we need to focus on sorting out how our provision will look in school on Monday.

Please note, **no child care will be provided without completion of this form**. Please write what your role is next to your ticked category.

Finally, I would like to reiterate the key message about the closure plans: **Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be**. We absolutely understand that families are worried about being able to work, but these are extraordinary times and we are all having to make some very difficult decisions and sacrifices. The challenges we face with our own staff and the national social distancing policy means we wish to minimise any risks and the number of students attending should only be in circumstances where it is essential.

This remains an ever-changing situation and the position may well change again in the future. We will continue to update you as the need arises.

I wish to thank all our school staff, volunteers, and Governors who have helped in recent days to keep the school open, and who will continue to do so over the coming months. I would also like to thank you for your continued support and understanding during this period.

Best wishes,

Bridget Harrison
Headteacher
Rackham (CE) Primary School



Child(rens) name:

If you intend to send your child into school on Monday, please tick or circle the category below which you feel fits the requirement for school support. Please write next to the circled category what your role is. Further evidence of this role will be required next week:

- **Children who are vulnerable. This includes those who are:**
 - **Supported by Social Care**
 - **Children in Care**
 - **Young carers**
 - **Disabled Children**
 - **Pupils with an EHCP**
- **Children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home. This includes those pupils where at least one parent or carer is identified as a 'critical worker' by the government. The list is as follows:**
 - **Health and social care**
 - **Education and childcare**
 - **Key public services**
 - **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 arm's length bodies.)

 - **Food and other necessary goods**
 - **Public safety and national security**
 - **Transport**
 - **Utilities, communication and financial services**