

Parents/Carers

Please ask for:

Email: generalenquiries@somerset.gov.uk

Date: 16 June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Coronavirus and Schools

Following recent Government decisions, Schools will prioritise provision for vulnerable children and those of critical workers as well as children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 only, with some face to face support for Years 10 and 12 in secondary schools – you can find the full details here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

I can assure you that there is nothing more that headteachers would like to see than their schools full of children again. However, given the current guidance schools have to follow around pupil numbers, safe working and also staff availability, many have to continue to apply a range of arrangements e.g. part-time provision, staggered start and finish times, and short weeks and it is unlikely that they will be able to make much, if any, additional provision available to other year groups.

Schools will continue to receive the full support of Somerset County Council services, including Public Health in planning and delivering this provision. Each educational setting is different, and we all need to support the professionalism and judgement of headteachers and education leaders who are having to make difficult decisions on a daily and weekly basis, with consideration for the context of their school, setting and community.

Headteachers will contact you directly if they are able to offer more places ahead of the school summer holidays.

Unfortunately, there is limited school transport available due to social distancing requirements and the availability of transport staff. Currently we anticipate that this situation will continue into the Autumn term. **I would therefore strongly advise you to plan to make your own arrangements for travel wherever possible so that we can try to meet the needs of all children.** There is financial help available, in the form of a fuel allowance, for families who undertake to transport a child to school who is eligible for free transport. Details are available from your school transport officer at schooltransportrequests@somerset.gov.uk Details of the home to school transport available to you, will be included in your communications from individual schools.

Schools generally will not be open for critical workers during the summer holidays as there is no government guidance requiring schools to make this provision available.

If you need specific support, please contact Somerset Direct on 0300 790 6275.

I fully appreciate that the situation is challenging to many of you but I would ask that you understand that headteachers and staff in schools have been working continually during this period to support the response to the pandemic and it is vitally important that we all support the actions required to minimise community infection.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julian Wooster', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Julian Wooster
Director of Children's Services