



Friday 20th March 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

Supporting Children of Key Workers in Primary School

At approximately 5pm yesterday evening, the Minister for Education in Northern Ireland, Peter Weir MLA, made a statement outlining how schools will close from the end of the school day today, Friday 20th March, however, will open with skeleton staff on Monday 23rd March to support identified Key Workers.

Many principals in East Belfast have agreed to follow a coordinated response to ensure that we support the children of key workers in a similar way across our schools. Some schools may be in a position to provide more support, depending on the numbers of staff still available to work.

Firstly, it is vitally important that schools are aware how many children of key workers will be attending school on Monday morning.

With this in mind, if you are an identified key worker, please make contact with school by 5pm on Friday 20th March to inform us if your child will be attending. This can be by phone or e-mailing help@nettlefield.co.uk

Before contacting school, please pay particular attention to the following points. Schools will not be able to operate a 'normal' school day. Many of our schools are already operating with a significant reduction in staffing and this will probably continue to get worse over time. **To this end we may find that we have to prioritise certain applications if we are inundated with requests based on capacity, staffing and area of key work undertaken.**

Points to consider

- A list of key workers, issued by the Department of Education is listed below. More clarity on this area will follow later today.
- If only 1 parent is a key worker the other parent would be expected to look after the child so as to reduce the number of pupils attending school.
- In single parent families, the individual parent **MUST** be a key worker.
- If possible, alternative childcare arrangements should be sought before deciding to send your child to school. For example, with other family members, friends etc. Please try and use schools **as a last resort.** This is to try and limit the number of children and adults together in a small space in line with recent social distancing guidance.
- School will not have wraparound services available (e.g. Breakfast Club).

- Normal opening and closing time will apply.
- Children attending will be required to wear their school uniform.
- Please be advised that schools will be performing childcare duties, rather than teaching, as not all teachers are currently available to teach specific year groups and teachers must also be available to provide online / remote learning for pupils not in attendance.

We would ask that you pay attention to the points outlined above before deciding to send your child to school.

Obviously, it goes without saying, if your only option is to send your child to school, we will look after them in order to support you in your important role.

Yours sincerely,
Mr S A McLean
(Principal)

LIST OF KEY WORKERS AS OUTLINED ON DOCUMENTATION ISSUED TO SCHOOLS ON 19TH MARCH 2020

Please work with us to ensure that schools operate with a limited number of children and staff.

- Health and Social Care. This includes doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, home carers and staff required to maintain our health and social care sector
- Education and childcare. This includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who will remain active during the Covid-19 response
- Public safety and national security. This includes civilians and officers in the police (including key contractors), Fire and Rescue Service, prison service and other national security roles
- Transport. This will include those keeping air, water, road and rail transport modes operating during the Covid-19 response
- Utilities and Communication. This includes staff needed for oil, gas, electricity and water (including sewage) and primary industry supplies, to continue during the Covid-19 response, as well as key staff in telecommunications, post and delivery, services and waste disposal
- Food and other necessary goods. This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution and sale, as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (e.g hygiene, medical etc)
- Key national and local government including those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the Covid-19 response.