



24th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am pleased but by no means surprised that the first two days of 'school closure' have been a success. The learning experience provided in our schools has been worthwhile, engaging and fun for the children whose parents/carers are critical workers and have attended school. Staff from across the Trust have risen to the challenge in doing all that they can to make sure our children working from home have the resources and guidance they need to continue with their education as much as possible at this time. I have witnessed a real team spirit and incredible commitment from our staff at such a strange and testing time.

You will of course be aware that the Government announced a historic full lockdown for the country yesterday evening to reduce the further spread of COVID-19.

The single most important action we can all take, in fighting coronavirus, is to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives. When we reduce our day-to-day contact with other people, we will reduce the spread of the infection. That is why the Government is now (23 March 2020) introducing three new measures, which everyone should abide by:

1. Requiring people to stay at home, except for very limited purposes
2. Closing non-essential shops and community spaces
3. Stopping all gatherings of more than two people in public

Every citizen must comply with these new measures. The relevant authorities, including the police, will be given the powers to enforce them – including through fines and dispersing gatherings. These measures are effective immediately. The Government will look again at these measures in three weeks, and relax them if the evidence shows this is possible.

STAYING AT HOME

You should only leave the house for one of four reasons:

1. Shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible.
2. One form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household.
3. Any medical need, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person.
4. Travelling to and from work, but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home.

These four reasons are exceptions - even when doing these activities, you should be minimising time spent outside of the home and ensuring you are 2 metres apart from anyone outside of your household. These measures must be followed by everyone.

Separate advice is available for individuals or households who are isolating, and for the most vulnerable who need to be shielded. If you work in a critical sector outlined in this guidance, or your child has been identified as vulnerable, you can continue to take your children to school. Where parents do not live in the same household, children under 18 can be moved between their parents' homes.

For the full advice, please visit:
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Wolverhampton Local Authority have also published the following information for parents (as this is in line with Government guidance it applies to all parents across the UK):

All parents are being asked to follow these key principles:

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.
3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
4. 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.
5. Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors listed below, and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children will be prioritised for education provision. Only one parent has to be a critical worker, to access childcare at your school.

Key Workers/Critical workers are people who work in:

- Health and social care
- Education and childcare
- Key public services
- Local and national Government
- Food and other necessary goods
- Public safety and national security
- Transport
- Utilities, communication and financial services

If workers think they fall within the critical categories above they should confirm with their employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service.

There is also further information for parent and carers on school closures published by the Government which can be found on the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

I wish you and your families well and will be in contact as soon as I have any further updates.

Yours sincerely



Amarjit Cheema OBE
Chief Executive Officer