

20th March 2020

Dear parents and carers,

I wanted to follow up on the latest advice around childcare places for key workers.

Firstly, can I thank every family that has supported us in minimising the numbers of children coming to school and this reducing the risk for the vulnerable in society. A special thanks to those who have withdrawn their request for a place after discussion with the school and by finding another solution.

I am really sorry to have to tell you that in some places we are seeing what looks like an unreasonable level of demand on the schools. It is clear that in most schools there are only small numbers of children who really need a place, on some days, where they cannot be looked after at home if their key worker parent or parents/carers have to go to work. In a very few of our schools we are seeing levels of demand for places that simply cannot be borne out by what we know about the genuine need for childcare at school *as a last resort*.

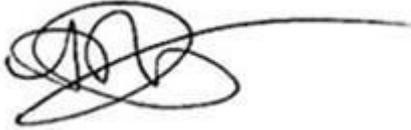
I would urge you to ask for a place only if there is no other way of looking after your child at home while you work in your keyworker role. We may ask for validation that you are a keyworker, including where your company is a supplier to the emergency services, for example by asking for confirmation from the emergency services. I am sorry that this has proved necessary but sadly if we are to manage this virus down we need to be quite clear about the justification for each child travelling to school and being among others.

I particularly wanted to empathise with those who are self-employed, where staying at home means that your income is diminished. I do not underestimate for a moment the pressure that this puts on families. There is due to be an announcement by the Chancellor very soon on financial support for people in this situation and I fervently hope that this will give you assurance and the right help. However, I must be clear that school cannot be used for childcare in these circumstances. We are in an unprecedented situation and we must only provide childcare where those in specified key roles have *no other alternative*, however difficult that alternative might be.

If you are facing financial hardship then we can help with meals and vouchers and there is information on the [.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website that is continually updated.

I am sorry to have to write this note but I hope that you understand the reasons why.

With every good wish for your families during this incredibly difficult period.



Amy Rice