

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020



Dear parents and carers,

We have now received the official advice from government on key workers and arrangements for childcare in schools.

There is a link to useful information that you may wish to read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>.

The information that has been sent to schools can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

This includes the information on who can be considered a key worker.

There have been confusing messages in the media which suggest that if one parent is a key worker then their child should/ can automatically come to school. **This is not accurate.**

The key messages that we have been given are in line with earlier advice we provided for parents and are as follows:

‘Many parents who are key workers working in these critical sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. **Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.**

And the most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID -19 is clear. **If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.**

That is why the government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who **absolutely need** to attend.

It is important to underline that schools, colleges and other educational establishments remain safe places for children. **But the fewer children**

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making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society.

Schools are, therefore, being asked to provide care for a limited number of children – children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

If it is possible for all children to be at home then they should be

Parents should do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus.'

You will see from these messages that the principle is unequivocally if your child can stay at home safely, they should.

It may help all parents and carers to know that **we are not, in effect, running schools in our school buildings** but we are running childcare settings. As things progress it may be that we need to share buildings with neighbouring schools or move provision around in similar ways in liaison with the local authority but we will keep you informed.

We will do everything we can to ensure that children staying at home, or indeed those who need to come into the school building, are not disadvantaged and that **all children get an equal chance to participate in the learning opportunities we are able to provide** in these highly challenging circumstances.

If you do need this provision, please contact school as soon as possible to let us know the days your child will need to attend. School will be open from 8.50-15.00. Dragons Den will be still available for those children of critical key workers who need this and this should be booked in the usual way.

Packed lunches will be provided for any children who receive **Free School Meals**. Please note this **does not** include the free school meals that Reception Y1 and Y2 receive under the universal free school meal initiative. This is only for people on certain benefits. If this applies to you and you would like a lunch, please ring or email the school office **each day** before 9.30. You can then collect packed lunches from the school office between 12.00-12.30.

With many thanks for your support in all of this and very best wishes  
The St George's Staff Team

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& Amy Rice CEO St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Academy Trust