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### **Supporting Children of Key Workers / Vulnerable Children / Children on F.S.M.**

Dear Parents,

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

On Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 our doors will re-open for a minority of pupils to support key workers as recently identified by the Minister for Education. This provision will:

- be dependent upon the number of staff available for work in our school;
- be dependent upon further clarification / changes by the Minister.
- be dependent on current social isolation restrictions.

#### **Please note the following:**

The main reason for our school closure on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March was to achieve social separation, to reduce the spread of the Coronavirus and to keep our children and staff safe. Advice is clear in that social separation is essential in the fight against Coronavirus. The more children there are at Academy, the less social separation and consequently the more transmission will occur. Before sending children to school, key workers should make every effort to make their own childcare arrangements with childminders, family members, friends or trusted neighbours. Key workers should only use schools as a last resort.

#### **Priority:**

- Priority will be given where both parents are working as key workers, and both parents are out at work at the same time or in single parent families, if the parent is a key worker and can make no alternative arrangements.
- Priority will then be given where both parents are working as key workers, and both parents are not out at work at the same time.
- Where one parent is a key worker, it is expected, indeed it is your responsibility that the other parent should provide childcare at home. Only in exceptional cases will this be considered.

#### **Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020**

- Our school will not have their wraparound services available.
- Normal opening and closing times will apply i.e. 0900 – 1400/1500 for children in P1-7
- Nursery children may only attend the morning session 0900-1130.
- Children should wear school uniform, bring a lunch / snack and own pencil cases.
- Our staff will primarily be providing childcare as teachers are also required to provide remote learning.

Please remember where both parents are key workers and your only childcare option is to send your child to school, we will look after your child in order to support you in your important role; we thank you for your service to our community.

A list of key workers issued by the Department of Education is listed below /overleaf.

- 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.).
- Other workers essential to delivering key public services.
- Key national and local government including those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the Covid-19 response

To help us plan ahead we need to know how many children of key workers are requesting a place! If you are an identified key worker and will be sending your child to school on Monday 23rd, please inform me on the email above, by 1900 tomorrow evening i.e. Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March with the following information:

Names of Parent(s).

Names and classes of pupils requesting a place.

Identified key workers' roles or in the case of a single family identified key worker role

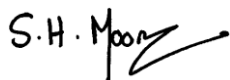
It is hoped to notify parents of places by email on Sunday by noon.

**And finally:**

- Vulnerable children should not at this stage attend school. They should be cared for in the safety of their own homes.
- Children on FSM accompanied by an adult may collect a lunch from school between 1200-1230 daily as long as the school is informed.

I am grateful to my colleagues in Castlereagh and further afield and to colleagues in the Ulster Teachers Union and National Association of Head Teachers for helping me compile this response.

Yours sincerely,



S.H Moore

Principal