

20 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Closure of School due to Coronavirus

Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be

We have been instructed by the Department for Education to close the school to all students except those students whose parents are key workers or have particular defined needs (see later section). This is part of the national strategy to delay the further spread of Coronavirus. **With effect from Monday 23 March, East Wold CE Primary School will be closed for all pupils including those of Key Workers. It will be closed until further notice. With effect from Monday 23 March, North Cockerington CE Primary School will be closed, until further notice, with limited care provision for those children who absolutely need to attend based on the government guidance.**

It is important to underline that schools, colleges and other educational establishments remain safe places for children. **But the fewer children 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.** We are therefore staying open for any vulnerable children. The school will be in contact directly with parents about these plans.

Parents who are key workers

Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined below. **Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. And every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.**

Please, therefore, 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.

In line with these principles, we are asking that children are sent into school only where both parents work in critical sectors (see the list below).

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

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.

You need to have informed the school of your role as a key worker to ensure they have a place on Monday. We will then contact you to confirm if we are able to provide a place. Please **DO NOT ASSUME** that we can provide a place.

Please be aware, we have sent many children home with symptoms of the Coronavirus. We believe that the coronavirus is out in our community and we have staff self-isolating due to symptoms too. In order to be able to continue to provide provision, we need to ensure we follow the principle that:

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

Many of our staff have vulnerable people at home too, and our provision is limited, please therefore you ensure this guidance is followed. We will be aiming to organise children in small groups spread around the school but our facilities are limited. We will be adopting as much social distancing in school that we can. It is therefore essential that only those that really need care are with us. This way we will be able to continue the provision and ensure lives are saved in our community.

I cannot stress enough that the Government clearly advises that **all children where possible should be at home to prevent the spread of Coronavirus**. This is why we have had to close schools.

They will also be safest at home from the Coronavirus.

Therefore I need to ask you to consider that even if you are a key worker if there is someone else in your family that can look after your child such as a spouse then they stay at home. Even if this means they can't work.

At OUR SCHOOL we need to support key workers whose work is essential and there is no alternative childcare arrangements.

If you feel you meet the criteria, please email the school at becky.dhami@north-cockerington.lincs.sch.uk and give your child(s) name and your keyworker role and your partner's keyworker role if they have one and a telephone number to ring you on.

If you have already sent a form you do not need to do another. We have them and will begin processing these today.

Please DO NOT ring school today to enquire if you have a place as this will slow down the processing of the forms. We aim to call you today to tell you if we can accommodate your child. This could be after school closes.

Please remember that my priority has to be the safety of my staff and the children here at OUR SCHOOL. It is a possibility that even though you may qualify as a key worker, due to numbers of request or lack of staff we will not be able to accommodate you. I know this will be disappointing.

I ask that you are patient and kind and remember that we are all trying to support each other to combat this dreadful virus.

Yours sincerely

Becky Dhami
Executive Headteacher

For AGREED children coming in to North Cockerington school as of Monday 23rd March 2020, the following measures/precautions **must be taken:**

- Own clothes to be worn which are fresh on – we recommend putting clothes straight in the washing machine once returning home from school to minimise and control the spread of infection.
- Children should wear layers – the windows will be open and we will be going outside.
- Up to date contact details for family members must be available within school and emergency contact details should your child become poorly or exhibit symptoms of contracting coronavirus.
- We must register your child in and out of the premises by somebody who either has parental responsibility or has been nominated by yourselves, as long as you are all fit and well and not showing symptoms of coronavirus.
- If you become unwell with coronavirus symptoms, you must **immediately** contact school and arrange for collection of your child.
- Social distancing **must** be enforced whilst your child is not in school if we are to prevent/minimise the spread of infection.
- School **must** be informed if you no longer fall within the critical worker list or you have been asked to self-isolate.
- Thorough hand washing to take place at home just before leaving the home.
- Children must be dropped off at school from 8.40 – 9.00 am and picked up by 3.20pm.

For children NOT coming in to school as of Monday 23rd March 2020:

- We will be providing resources and guidance for home learning on our web-site
- If you need to contact the school please phone/email 01507 327258 or enquiries@north-cockerington.lincs.sch.uk
- We will be communicating with you by email and the website.
- Please follow government advice on [self-isolation](#), [household isolation](#) and [social distancing](#).

Guidance

Closure of educational settings: information for parents and carers

Published 19 March 2020

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

Information for parents and carers about the closure of schools and other educational settings following the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19). This will be updated as we have further information available.

1. Closures of schools, childcare and other educational settings

1.1 What age groups does this cover?

The changes cover children at registered childcare providers (including nurseries and childminders), primary and secondary schools and further education colleges. This is for both state-funded and independent schools.

1.2 Will it be mandatory for all schools, colleges and registered childcare providers to remain open in some form?

We are asking schools, colleges, nurseries, childminders and other registered childcare settings to remain open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children where they can.

We understand that some may be unable to do so especially if they are experiencing severe staff shortages. We will work with local areas to use neighbouring schools, colleges and childcare providers to continue to support vulnerable children and children of critical workers.

1.3 How long will schools and colleges be closed for?

Due to the coronavirus outbreak, schools, colleges and childcare providers will be closed to the majority of pupils until further notice.

1.4 Will this apply to independent schools and boarding schools?

Yes. We are asking independent schools and boarding schools to do the same as state schools and remain open for critical workers and vulnerable children.

1.5 Will registered childcare providers, schools and colleges be open over Easter holidays for holiday clubs and childcare?

Where possible, we would encourage childcare providers, schools and colleges to continue to look after critical workers' children and vulnerable children throughout the Easter holidays.

1.6 I am a critical worker or have a vulnerable child - can you guarantee that my child will attend their usual school or childcare provider?

We are expecting the majority of settings to stay open for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children so they can continue to attend their usual provider, but we acknowledge this will be impossible for some - such as small rural schools.

Where a setting is unable to stay open, we will work with the local educational authority, regional school commissioners and neighbouring providers to find an alternative setting for their pupils.

1.7 I am a critical worker or have a vulnerable child - how will my child get to school if the only school open is not nearby?

We are working closely with local authorities to ensure that children can attend the best setting for them, and will provide transport arrangements to support them.

1.8 I am a critical worker or have a vulnerable child but I don't want to send my child in to school or childcare, do I have to?

Many parents 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.

This is an offer to parents and carers and there is no requirement for parents and carers to send their children to school if they do not need or wish to do so.

For vulnerable children, your child's social worker will work with you to assess the best option for your child.

1.9 Does this affect universities and other higher education institutions?

Universities and other higher education providers should make their own judgements based on latest Public Health England guidance. Vice chancellors are well placed to make decisions about their own institution, and many have already moved all their teaching online. The government is supporting them with these decisions.

Advice continues to be that all student accommodation should remain open unless advised otherwise by Public Health England. Many universities provide homes to international students, estranged students and care leavers who might not have anywhere else to go.

The Department is working with the Home Office to avoid individuals and institutions being penalised if online provision inadvertently leads to [non-compliance with Tier 4 visa rules](#).

1.10 Does this apply to special schools?

We recognise that children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and their parents and carers are facing numerous challenges as a result of coronavirus. We are encouraging local authorities to keep open both residential special schools and residential specialist colleges wherever possible. In addition, we want to keep the majority of day special schools and colleges open, including moving staff into these settings to avoid closure.

Special schools, colleges and local authorities are advised to make case by case basis assessments of the health and safeguarding considerations of pupils and students on an education, health and care (EHC) plan. For some, they will be safer in an education provision. For others, they will be safer at home. We trust leaders and parents to make these decisions and will support them as required.

1.11 Why is my nursery telling me that they will continue to charge me during corona virus-related closures?

The government acknowledges that in many cases, the insurance that early years providers have will not cover them for income lost during COVID-19-related closures.

That is one of the reasons why it announced on 17 March that government would not claw back early years entitlements funding from local authorities during closures, or where children are withdrawn because of COVID-19. This protects a significant proportion of early years providers' income.

In addition, the government has set out a range of support for businesses to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on them. This includes a business rate holiday for all private childcare providers for one year from 1 April. Local authorities will be fully compensated for the cost of this.

In light of these steps taken already, we are asking providers to be reasonable and balanced in their dealings with parents. The government is urgently keeping what further support businesses may require under close review.

3. Vulnerable children

3.1 Is my child counted as vulnerable?

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Children who have a social worker include children in need, children who have a child protection plan and those who are looked after by the local authority. We will work with schools, early years, FE providers and local authorities to help identify the children who most need support at this time.

We know that schools will also want to look to support other children who are vulnerable where they are able to do so.

3.2 What will happen with free school meals for those not in school and colleges?

We know that free school meals are important for many families.

To make sure eligible children can continue to be supported, we will give schools and colleges the flexibility to provide meals or vouchers to children eligible for free school meals. They will be reimbursed by the Department. As soon as possible, we will put in place a national voucher system.

More information on [support for pupils eligible for school meals](#) is available.

4. Critical workers

4.1 Will I be counted as a critical worker?

Critical workers include NHS staff, police, farmers and food retail workers, who need to be able to go out to work.

In order to continue to offer critical services as part of the country's ongoing response to the virus, children of workers who form a central part of effort - such as NHS workers, police and delivery drivers - will also continue to attend school, college or childcare provider.

A full list of critical workers and further information is available.

4.2 If only one parent or carer is a critical worker, can I send my children in to school?

Children with at least one parent or carer who are identified as critical workers by the government can send their children to school if required.