

19<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

### **RE: School Closures – Update 5**

At this time, I have still received limited information regarding next steps, however, have taken the decision to write to you so we can begin the planning process in school.

#### Remote Learning

All pupils should use the work packs sent home earlier this week. As previously stated, we shall continue to update you with ideas and learning on a regular basis via ParentMail and our website – [www.west-borough.kent.sch.uk](http://www.west-borough.kent.sch.uk) – Children – Remote Learning.

Please note that pupils should remain at home or in another appropriate indoor place during the school day, taking suitable breaks for their general wellbeing. Pupils should not be out in public places during school hours.

#### Absence coding

Throughout the period of school closure all pupils will be ‘Y’ coded. No absences, authorised or unauthorised, will be registered against pupils.

#### Primary School Assessments

The government have announced that no Primary School Assessments will take place this May and June. This includes the Year 1 Phonics Screening, KSI & 2 SATs Tests and the Year 4 Multiplication Screening. Some of the learning we have provided for children still practices these essential key skills and knowledge. We would encourage children to continue practicing these as when they return to school they will still be using them.

#### Free School Meals

We are conscious that a number of children are eligible for Free School Meals. The most recent DFE advice on this states:

*To support children eligible for free school meals, schools will be able to purchase meals or vouchers for supermarkets or local shops.*

*The government has also confirmed that the total value of vouchers offered to each eligible child per week will exceed the rate it pays to schools for free school meals, recognising that families will not be buying food in bulk and may therefore incur higher costs. The final amounts will be confirmed shortly.*

*Effective immediately, schools will be able to order vouchers directly from supermarkets or shops in their communities to be emailed or printed and posted to families, and they will have their costs covered by the Department for Education. Guidance for schools will be published shortly.*

While we await this guidance, we would not want to leave any child in need without provision; therefore during this initial period, if you require support with provision of food, please contact Mrs Burtwell during normal school hours, in complete confidence and we will make some arrangements with you. Her number is 07794 778958.

#### Safeguarding and other urgent concerns

Whilst we have given you ways to contact the school for various reasons, there may be a need for parents or carers to contact senior staff about a safeguarding issue. In this instance, you can email one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads at [dsl@west-borough.kent.sch.uk](mailto:dsl@west-borough.kent.sch.uk) or text Mrs Burtwell during normal school hours. This will be available from Monday. May I remind you that anyone with a safeguarding concern that needs advice can also contact [KCC](#).

### Pupils who may still attend

Quite rightly, we will be expected to make provision for two specific groups of pupils: those whose parents or carers are key workers and those who have an Education & Healthcare Plan (EHCP).

**Please note that we will only be able to make provision for pupils who fall into these two criteria. There will be no exceptions.** We realise that this will be difficult for some parents & carers, but we cannot start making individual arrangements in the interests of fairness, consistency and achieving the purpose of school closures (minimising social contact). Please be considerate and do not put us in a difficult position by asking us to accommodate your child if they do not meet the criteria, forcing us to come into potential conflict with you by saying no. If your child does have an EHCP and you **are not** a key worker, please do not complete the form, we will contact you directly.

Please be aware that those children who do attend will be undertaking similar activities to those of their peers who are working at home, but may involve project based learning and other activities. The purpose of the school closures is to minimise contact and therefore we will be providing skeleton staffing to provide supervision and care for pupils who do attend. This means that we will not be running a normal timetable. It is perhaps worth noting that the Secretary of State has been clear that this is an entirely different role for schools and their staff. It is primarily about care, not education.

**As we will need to plan staffing, we will need to know in advance which pupils we will have in school. Therefore, if you think you meet the criteria, please complete the attached form. All responses must be received by 12:00 midday on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March.**

Once we have received your form, we will assess the validity of your request, and then confirm with you by return email. If you indicate that your child will attend and this changes for any reason, please let us know. Apologies for having to be so prescriptive about this; we know you will understand why this is necessary. Requirements for dates following the Easter Holiday will be requested in due course.

We are anticipating normal school hours remaining in place. We hope to be able to offer breakfast club for those who need it (from 8am) Please indicate your requirements on the form. Harlequin are also able to offer an afterschool service, please contact them directly.

Please note that children will need to bring a packed lunch; there will be no catering facilities available in school. If your child is eligible for Free School Meals and you indicate that you wish us to do so, we will provide them with a packed lunch.

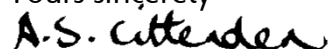
We are awaiting definitive guidance on what constitutes 'key workers'. For now, our working definition is that key workers include *NHS staff, teachers, police officers and PCSOs, prison officers, probation staff, armed forces, social workers, firefighters, workers in logistics (transport, delivery, refuse collection etc) and civil service personnel*. We will provide a definitive definition when it becomes available. For now, if you believe you are a key worker and your occupation does not fall within this list, please submit a form and we will discuss this with you.

There has been an indication from the Secretary of State that he would like schools to continue to provide this service to key workers over the upcoming Easter break. We will need to await further details, but if this proves to be the case, we will endeavour to do so.

We feel very sad that we have had to put these arrangements in place and we thank you for your understanding and support. I would like to take the opportunity to publicly thank all our wonderful staff who have worked so hard this week to allow us to keep the school open.

As already stated, we shall continue to be in contact with all our families in one way or another during this challenging period and are very much looking forward to when our school can be reunited and return to normal. That time will come and we will be ready.

Yours sincerely



Mrs A Crittenden  
Headteacher