

School Closure Updates re Covid19

24/3/20 update

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Section 1: Messages for all

Your understanding (as a community) of the operational issues we are facing has been exceptional. This has enabled us to better navigate the difficulty of receiving strong statements from government while having little in-depth guidance on implementation.

Somewhat understandably, due to the speed of this crisis, official guidance for schools often raises more questions than answers. Furthermore, there is a lot of prediction and supposition about what schools need to do in the future such as, accepting pupils from local closed schools and opening during Easter. I will only share details with you when full and established guidance becomes available. With the situation changing so quickly it would be foolhardy to make a decision on future plans too early and risk these plans changing thereby confusing everyone. In our current situation everyday is a lifetime.

Section 2: For everyone at home

More suggestions for you (based on what we usually do at school):

Framing timings

We spend a lot of time explaining to the children what they are **about to do** and **how long they have** to do it. This helps them to compartmentalise the demand of the activity-remember when an exam invigilator said to you "You have ten minutes left". Therefore, instead of being immediate (eg: "Right stop that and now do this") frame the timings: 'In 10 minutes we'll start on...', "OK, 1 minute left and let's do..."

Social Stories

Not completely relevant for home schooling but a good technique of which to be aware: If you think your child will be anxious about something coming up in the future (like another day of home schooling!) talk with them, in advance, through the steps **towards it happening** and then **what it will look like** when it is happening. We do this on the run up to residential trips for those with anxiety about the unknown. My analogy for this is: you are on the way to a party but you know none of your existing friends will be there. You are certain you will enjoy it but it still makes you anxious before you get in there.

Presenting new material using small steps

Since the teachers are now having to drop whole pieces of work online in one go they aren't able to do the usual 'scaffolding'- the best bit of teaching! It's necessary then for the children to pick up **a new concept a little piece at a time**. The concept needs to be broken

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down in to the smallest pieces you can think of and **then built up slowly**. This idea also incorporates 'modelling'- in it's basic form that is when the teacher **approaches the concept first while the pupil watches how they do it**. But don't fret about trying to do all this- teachers are trying to avoid online work which needs this sort of teaching application.

Section 3: For critical key workers with pupils at school

Thank you for pulling together arrangements for your child to stay home where possible. Due to the lower numbers today we have been able to create some semblance of social distancing for the pupils. We are also able to cope better as we continue to rota staff around social distancing, since it is important we give them the choice to think of their own safety too.

We are painfully aware that everyone has to deal with their own reality in this crisis- in terms of health and finances everyone has their own challenge. We will continue to support with emergency childcare but we will always put the health of the children foremost by encouraging as many of them to stay home as possible.

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Section 1: Messages for all

It is hugely appreciated that parents have largely followed our guidance. I appreciate that there is a lot of information to take in from us but it is vital that you read the information targeted to you, this is why I am now attempting to put these updates in to relevant sections. Reading these helps us by alleviating the pressure of dealing with individual queries that we've already answered in these updates. We will always be as available as possible to clarify any guidance (bearing in mind that, with fast moving change, sometimes we don't know ourselves).

Current school status:

Front Office: large impact due to most team requiring to socially distance- at least one person will attempt to be available 8-9am and more if possible.

The majority of teachers and TAs are now isolating with family or distancing as they follow the latest guidance to stay safe at home.

Section 2: For critical key workers with pupils at school

Thank you for bearing with us as we carefully check if emergency childcare is the right choice in each family situation. This morning went better than we expected due to your patience, but there are still issues to iron out. The trajectory of this virus certainly points

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towards it becoming ever more serious and we should anticipate the possibilities in the coming days:

1. Status quo: continued full closure with very few of the critical staff pupils attending. "If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading."
2. The government chooses to take a stricter lockdown line to encourage the country to take this more seriously- if they do this might mean that our criteria for opening changes.
3. We continue to lose staff members to isolation and distancing and enter a critical phase which leads to our own complete shutdown.

Section 3: For everyone at home

More suggestions to help you get through...

Routine

Day 1 at home. Have you managed to stick to a loose **routine**? Children will react best to consistency- sticking to **bedtime routines** especially helps with ongoing attitude. Building in breaks or changes to any activity helps compartmentise the day.

Rules

Make use of our school rules if you think they will help. Remember, you can use these **preemptively** eg. Are you keeping yourself safe by standing on that chair? They can also be used **positively** eg. You've really demonstrated the green rule by completing that task. Finally, the 'Be School Ready' rule could be converted to a bedtime routine rule.

Ladygrove Standard
Be safe and help others
Show respect and tolerance
Listen and follow instructions
Be responsible for possessions
Show good manners
Be school ready
Have a Positive Mental Attitude

Awards

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Give a **'virtual' Headteacher's Sticker** if your child has really impressed you (ie. Done even more than you expected). Don't give too many though or they will be devalued.



Home Emergency

It might seem strange but it's prudent to consider discussing with your child in advance **what to do in an emergency at home**- so everyone is clear on their roles and expectations- eg. who to phone, where to move to or where to stay put, what the fire alarm sound like, etc.

Talking about current events

Think about how your child is being **exposed to information** about the virus. If they are listening to you sharing stories with other adults or if they have unlimited access to social media/coverage, they will be assimilating more than you expect and may not show you their true level of personal concern about it. Likewise, consider not completely hiding your child from the situation- they will already be confused by the lack of normality.

Nurture this conversation without sensationalism or panic, keep to the basic facts, don't dwell too long, know that they look to you to feel safe.

23/3/20 update AM

Section 1: Message for all

School remains closed.

As of today we are in uncharted territory.

In the days before closure it became apparent that quite a few families do not read these updates. Please could you alert and share these updates widely- this will help with the volume of calls relating to issues already addressed in the updates.

Emergency Home School Agreement:

1. All parents should expect that things will not initially go smoothly; bear with us.
2. Teachers are now working as carers to ensure the correct people can continue to do jobs specifically to combat the virus directly, issues created through it and its spread.
3. Online work officially starts today between teachers and the pupils in their class through Google Classrooms. However, note that teachers are now dividing their time between working at school and online, therefore they may be offline on some days.

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Please do not expect your child's teacher to attempt to work online while also acting as child care at school.

4. School staff continue to be equally affected by the current situation, we still have up to 50% of school staff either self isolating or social distancing.
5. School leadership activity now consists of monitoring interactions online, handling the rota of onsite provision (made more fluid by staff coming in to and off of isolation) and strategic planning for reopening.
6. The government are considering ever tougher measures to help people abide by the need for social distancing. Here we reiterate the government guidance: **"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."**

Section 2: Messages for those using emergency childcare

We are proud to be able to help those who are addressing the critical issues around the virus spread by offering this limited childcare. Nevertheless, you make the final decision about using our childcare ensuring you are informed by the government's latest, very strong recommendation, to abide by social distance. Schools have been instructed to stay open to take groups of critical key worker and vulnerable pupils for emergency childcare but social distancing cannot be enacted under these arrangements- if you are not happy with this, make different arrangements. Your choice must be guided by the expectation we have of this issue when admitting your child.

If your child is on the register, please **think before they enter school** each day:

1. Is this **childcare unavoidable** and is it **specifically** for my work **to support those who need help or to stop the virus spread?**
2. Do I have **contact with others who are elderly or vulnerable** and sending my child to school could lead to further spread?

Do not enter if your child or anyone in your household is **showing symptoms**. Contact us to give us this update.

Note that it remains possible that the school could close entirely, due to severe lack of staff. Complete closure will be communicated via the app and website as soon as the decision is made.

What to expect of 'reduced provision'

1. Staff will monitor safety and intervene on any inappropriate behaviour
2. Staff will provide a variety of activities but these will not necessarily have educational value.
3. Playtime and lunchtime will be monitored for appropriate play and eating.
4. It is highly likely that there will be a very wide mix of age ranges in groups.
5. School rules apply.

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6. Uniform is not necessary.

Section 3: Messages for parents with children at home

We will have more for you in this section when onsite organisation has settled.

20/3/20 update PM

Firstly, thank you for your support and rational approach to the issues at this unprecedented time. We really appreciate that you have shown understanding of the invidious position schools have been put in, navigating through unwieldy guidance. As a school we recognise that everyone wants some certainty. We will continue to do what we can.

Emergency Childcare Only

This afternoon we have started attempting to address the requests for **emergency child care**. Due to the fact that the sanctioned list of key workers is very large, we are starting to get large numbers asking for it. This will **negate the point of closing the school** to stem the virus spread.

All we can do is reiterate the government guidance:

“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.”

Some parents have interpreted the position as if standard child care is available. Please consider the above implications of sending your child if there is any way they can stay at home and your job is not essential to the ‘front line’.

We can already foresee that on **Monday** we will have to manage each individual child on arrival. **Please do not expect this to go smoothly.**

We will be working through the weekend to prepare but you should still **expect delays on Monday morning** as we ensure all is in place for each child on our register. It will not be a normal day in any respect.

If you have applied through the google form and **have not heard from us then you can assume that your child(ren) is on the register for emergency childcare**. However, we may approach you at some point to talk about the rationale behind your child attending school, if there appears to be capacity for them to be looked after safely at home.

For those who attend **emergency childcare** on Monday here are the expectations:

- This is now child care which does not have educational expectations
- Drop off at the hall side entrance at 8.40pm
- Pick up at the hall side entrance at 3.10pm
- If your child requires hot school dinner please tell us at drop off (unfortunately this is still chargeable unless your child already has free school meals)
- If symptoms become apparent in your household you must stop bringing your child to school and isolate for 14 days.

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- Drop off on Monday may take some time as we implement this new protocol- please be patient.

Once we have finessed the practical arrangements for those onsite, these updates will turn again to focus on best practice for learning at home. Thank you again for your understanding.

20/3/20 update AM

From 3.10pm today **school will be closed** (6pm for those in After School Club). Closure is to help stem the spread of the virus. We will reopen next week, only for particular vulnerable children and those who have parents working in defined critical and key sector roles (as below). Unfortunately, the information we need to move our planning forward, expected yesterday, did not arrive until the early hours of this morning. This means that we need more time to plan- we expect to be inundated with queries because of the urgency and nature of the guidance. It is vital that we organise everything correctly and do not make errors by rushing. We will be finalising the new arrangements within school and with individual parents through today, the weekend and even on Monday.

If Section 1 below about 'vulnerable' children or critical and key sector worker roles does not apply to you, please go to Section 2 at the bottom. If you think it applies to you please read everything on this update.

Section 1:

Parents in Critical or Key Sector Roles

(Reduced provision - 'care for a limited number of children')

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 reduced provision:

Note from DfE Guidance: 'If workers think they fall within the critical categories below they should confirm with their employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service.'

Health and social care

This includes but is not limited to:

- doctors
- nurses
- midwives
- paramedics
- social workers
- care workers
- other frontline health
- social care staff including volunteers
- support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector
- those working as part of the health and social care supply chain (including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment).

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Education and childcare

- nursery staff
- teaching staff
- social workers
- specialist education professionals (who must remain active during the COVID-19 response to deliver this approach.)

Key public services

This includes those essential to the running of the:

- justice system
- religious staff
- charities and workers delivering key frontline services
- management of the deceased
- journalists and broadcasters (who are providing public service broadcasting.)

Local and national government

This only includes those administrative occupations:

- essential to the effective delivery of the COVID-19 response
- delivering essential public services (such as the payment of benefits including in government agencies and arms-length bodies.)

Food and other necessary goods

This includes those involved in:

- food production
- processing
- distribution
- sale and delivery
- provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines).

Public safety and national security

This includes:

- police and support staff
- Ministry of Defence civilians
- contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic)
- fire and rescue service employees (including support staff)
- National Crime Agency staff
- those maintaining border security
- prison and probation staff
- other national security roles, including those overseas.

Transport

This includes those who will keep these operation modes running, during the COVID-19 response:

- air
- water

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- road and rail passenger
- freight transport
- those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

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Utilities, communication and financial services

This includes staff needed for essential services provision, including but not limited to:

- workers in banks
- building societies
- financial market infrastructure
- the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage)
- information technology and data infrastructure sector
- primary industry supplies to continue during the COVID-19 response
- key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications, including but not limited to:
 - network operations
 - field engineering
 - call centre staff
 - IT and data infrastructure
 - 999 and 111 critical services
 - postal services and delivery
 - payments providers
 - waste disposal sectors

If you require a place based on all the above information please first and foremost, confirm with your employer that your ***'specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service.'*** If so, then please do complete the Critical Worker registration form that will shortly be sent on ParentPay.

Vulnerable Children

DfE defines 'vulnerable' children as those who are supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs, including child in need plans, on child protection plans, 'looked after' children, young carers, disabled children and those with [education, health and care \(EHC\) plans](#).

All these children are known to us at school and school will be communicating with those parents.

A guide for those who are offered 'reduced provision' on the above criteria

We will operate normal school hours of 8.40am to 3.10pm for these children. Provision will be based on child care but with access to learning resources. We will not be operating extended schools services (breakfast and after school club).

We expect to be flexible with attendance and just ask that you attempt to give us 2 days notice when you want your child to start or stop attending- this is to ensure we have the appropriate staffing in place.

As you can imagine, there is no agreed policy in place for any of the operational arrangements. This is emergency childcare/reduced provision, if you have queries about the provision, we will talk to you individually to clarify government guidance directing schools. Government isolation rules still apply, inform us if your child will discontinue attendance due to isolation.

If, due to lack of staff through isolation or illness, school is forced to close during this period, we will inform those on the register by the normal procedures.

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Section 2:

Please now read these statements directly from the guidance:

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 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 continue 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**.

We have been asked to emphasise that **only parents who have been offered a place can attend school from Monday**. We cannot admit your child if we have not pre-arranged it. However, we will **constantly review** the situation and **follow updated guidance** on changing this offer. We will communicate any changes in this document as soon as we know more. If closure becomes a **longer term** matter, it is assumed that **Local Authorities will create procedures** by which schools will begin to operate.

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19/3/20 update

Rationale for this new update document

- it will be **updated** whenever we have new information
- It will cover **general information about learning at home**. (Specific guidance for learning at home should be addressed with your child's teacher through Google Classroom or any other means that the teacher communicates to you)
- It will cover **general arrangements for any partial opening** for key workers and vulnerable children
- It will cover **arrangements for reopening** when we know more

We continue to prepare the children for learning at home, which will begin on Monday. Again, please bear in mind that teachers time may be split between managing the online learning and working with children onsite.

Some initial ideas for supporting the home learning environment

- Try to set a routine- it doesn't have to be a timetable- just some basic expectations about what will be achieved during the day/week
- As you know, time routines also help everyone feel in control and aids smooth running/behaviour
- It's particularly effective for retention for children to review what they learnt in their last session, before moving on to something new
- If asking your child questions about what they are learning, keep the question 'open'. Closed questions are ones which have a single answer, open questions usually starting 'Why' or 'How' are more beneficial for thinking.
- It is now widely recognised that the key to learning success is a wide vocabulary so spend time exploring/unpicking the vocabulary of the subject. For further reference please see the year group learning organisers we sent out at the start of the term.
- As well as getting to grips with Google Classroom, remember there are resources on the school website.

Logistics, Key Workers and Vulnerable Pupils

Schools have not yet been sent clarification on the criteria for key worker and vulnerable children. Once we receive confirmation we will outline the criteria here and ask parents to contact us based on their need for school care.

Pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium- food vouchers

For pupils who receive free school meals (only those who are eligible since they are on a lower income, not Universal Free School Meals). The school will be organising a voucher scheme for a local supermarket chain. If your child is registered as having free school meals talk to the office in confidence to obtain these vouchers.