

London Borough of Enfield

# St. Mary's Catholic Primary School



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20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents,

## Coronavirus – Maintaining Educational Provision

Early this morning the Government published some new guidance for schools. This sets out a very broad list of Key Workers (guidance is attached).

Please let us know as a priority if you are a Key Worker and will require us to assist you to provide care for your child from Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March (9am →3pm). Please do not turn up on the day with your child.

**I know that the vast majority of families will want to keep their children at home which is the recommended way forward now in our country's efforts to reduce the spread of the virus.**

The Government states in this new guidance that “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 the wider society.”

Our school sadly will close this evening in line with the direction from the Government which was announced this week.

Many of our own staff have families and will need to follow the Government advice to stay at home too. A small number fall into vulnerable categories due to their health. This means that from next week we will have limited staff.

Many children (and adults) will be keen to go out and socialise as they do normally. We urge you all not to engage in this as we go into this new phase of closing schools. All medical advice is currently to that effect, so ongoing gatherings of children / adults will dramatically undermine the recent increased efforts across London and around the UK to save lives.



## Important

- Please contact the school asap if you believe you qualify and need your child to have provision.
- Please understand that you will need to have clear evidence that you are eligible and we can only cater for small numbers ideally (to avoid close contact).
- If there is another parent / child minder etc. who is able to look after your child then your child must stay at home.
- If our staffing levels reduce or the local authority sets up hubs your child may need to attend a hub.
- No child must come to school. The Government's current plan is to reduce social contact.

I know you will understand that it has not been helpful to you or to our school that the government has taken until early this morning to publish this guidance.

We are working hard to adapt to the changes each day brings and are grateful to the wonderful support we receive always from so many parents.

I wish you well in these uncertain times. You are in our thoughts and prayers each day here. Let's all pray and work for life to go back to normal as soon as possible.

With best wishes,

*M. Creed*

Miss M Creed  
Headteacher



As a country, we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

That is why the government has given clear guidance on self-isolation, household isolation and social distancing.

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 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.

Vulnerable children include children 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.

We know that schools will also want to support other children facing social difficulties and we will support head teachers to do so.

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.

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:

## **Health and social care**

This includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the 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.

## **Education and childcare**

This includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those 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, those responsible for the management of the deceased, and 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 or 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 as well as those essential to the 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 and other national security roles, including those overseas.

## **Transport**

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

## **Utilities, communication and financial services**

This includes staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure), the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage), information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the COVID-19 response, as well as 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 and waste disposal sectors.

If workers think they fall within the critical categories above 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.

If your school is closed then please contact your local authority, who will seek to redirect you to a local school in your area that your child, or children, can attend.

We are grateful for the work of teachers and workers in educational settings for continuing to provide for the children of the other critical workers of our country. It is an essential part of our national effort to combat this disease.