



March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

COVID-19 Update

Closure

As you know, school will close for the foreseeable future at the end of today (Friday 20th March). The government has asked schools to remain open to a small group of vulnerable children and to the children of those parents identified as key workers. There is more information about both of these categories outlined below.

Although schools have been asked to remain partially open to some children, the advice to prevent a further transmission of this disease is to keep your child at home if safe and possible to do so:

“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.” Gov.UK

Our interpretation of this is that even if you are a key worker, if you can safely keep your children at home then you ought to. However, we ask that you confirm this intention with us.

Questionnaires

Thank you to those parents who have completed the questionnaires telling us whether you are a key worker or not. If you have not already done so please could I urge you to complete the electronic or paper version of this as soon as possible. We apologise for any difficulty you may have had with this due to the high demand for parents and schools across the country using this to communicate today.

Those children classed as vulnerable 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.

If you are eligible to use our provision during this crisis, it is important that we know in advance whether you intend to send your child or not. Please keep us informed of any changes to what you may have previously told us. This is because we will be running a skeleton staff in order to allow our staff to follow the Government’s advice of limiting social contact and working from home whenever possible.

Education

In order to mitigate the loss of direct face to face educational provision, all children have been provided with an education pack to cover the next two weeks of learning. They will also receive daily communication with challenges and activities via Marvellous Me. We will update you in the coming weeks with regards to any further learning for after the Easter holiday.

If your child was in school today, they will have brought their pack home with them. Children coming back to school can bring their packs to work through with staff in school.

If your child has not got their pack, please see the 'Coronavirus Information' page in the 'News and Events' section of our website for a timetable of when these can be collected on Monday, or contact the office to make other arrangements.

Safeguarding

We will continue to take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will be providing access to Designated Safeguarding Leaders should there be issues that children wish to access support during what will be a stressful and uncertain time.

Meals

If your child is entitled to income based free schools meals (**not** universal free school meals for all 5-7 year olds) and will not be in school, we will be in touch with you on Monday to make arrangements for a weekly hamper of food to be provided. More details about the distribution of these hampers will follow for those families affected.

If your child is in school next week, we will aim to run a normal menu and expect that your child will have their usual menu options. Normal payment options will apply during this period. We will assess how the situation progresses and may need to change the menu if supplies or staffing shortages begin to impact but we will keep you informed of any changes as the days progress.

Communication

All contact from home to school should be directed through the office. We will have admin staff on-site daily to answer the phone and receive emails each day. They will forward any emails to class teachers if you have queries regarding work that has been set or any other issues. Please put the class teacher's name in the subject box to speed up this process. Our email address is: primary@bluecoat.uk.com

This will be the last 'letter' regarding the closure. All further updates will be added to our 'coronavirus information' page on our website under the 'News and Events' section.

Thank you

We are truly living in unprecedented times. I want to thank all parents for their support during this period. We are conscious about the vast amount of information we have been trying to relay in very rapidly changing times. We will need to continue working closely with you to monitor the work that we are sending home and to encourage children to keep safe and keep up a learning routine. At a time when we all need to work to support each other we have very much felt supported by our parents and local communities. It is also important to remember to thank the staff at all of our schools who are trying to support children who are at best confused and in many cases distressed. Their determination to help at this moment of national crisis, regardless of the cost to themselves, has been humbling.

Yours sincerely, S Shaw, Head Teacher