



East Antrim Primary Principal's Association

Thursday 19th March 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

Ref: Supporting Children of Key Workers in Primary School

At approximately 5pm this evening, the Minister for Education in Northern Ireland, Peter Weir MLA, made a statement outlining how schools will close from the end of the school day tomorrow, Friday 20th March, however, will open with skeleton staff on Monday 23rd March to support identified Key Workers.

You are receiving this letter as your child's primary school is represented, by your principal, on the East Antrim Principal Association. Many principals on this association have agreed to follow a coordinated response to ensure that we support the children of key workers in a similar way across our schools. Some schools may be in a position to provide more support, depending on the numbers of staff still available to work.

Firstly, it is vitally important that schools are aware how many children of key workers will be attending school on Monday morning. With this in mind, if you are an identified key worker, please make contact with your child's primary school by **11am on Friday 20th March** to inform school if your child will be attending. This can be by phone or e-mail. E-mail: info@victoriaps.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk

Before contacting school, **please pay particular attention to the following points**. Schools will not be able to operate a 'normal' school day. Many of our schools are already operating with a significant reduction in staffing and this will probably continue to get worse over time.

Points to consider

- A list of key workers, issued by the Department of Education is listed overleaf. Only children with **BOTH** parents working as key workers, and **both parents out at work at the same time** should consider attending school. In single parent families, the individual parent **MUST** be a key worker.
- If possible, alternative childcare arrangements should be sought before deciding to send your child to school. For example, with other family members, friends etc. Please try and use schools as a last resort. **This is to try and limit the number of children and adults together in a small space in line with recent social distancing guidance.**
- Initially, schools will not have wraparound services available. Each school's normal opening and closing time will apply. Eg 9am – 2pm, 9am – 3pm.
- Children attending will be required to wear their school uniform. Please be advised that schools will be performing childcare duties, rather than teaching, as not all teachers are currently available to teach specific year groups and teachers must also be available to provide online / remote learning.

We would ask that you pay attention to the points outlined above before deciding to send your child to school. Obviously, it goes without saying, if your **only** option is to send your child to school, we will look after them in order to support you in your important role.

Yours sincerely,

Principals (East Antrim Principal's Association)

LIST OF KEY WORKERS AS OUTLINED ON DOCUMENTATION ISSUED TO SCHOOLS ON 19TH MARCH 2020

Please work with us to ensure that schools operate with a limited number of children and staff.

- Health and Social Care. This includes doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, home carers and staff required to maintain our health and social care sector
- Education and childcare. This includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who will remain active during the Covid-19 response
- Public safety and national security. This includes civilians and officers in the police (including key contractors), Fire and Rescue Service, prison service and other national security roles
- Transport. This will include those keeping air, water, road and rail transport modes operating during the Covid-19 response
- Utilities and Communication. This includes staff needed for oil, gas, electricity and water (including sewage) and primary industry supplies, to continue during the Covid-19 response, as well as key staff in telecommunications, post and delivery, services and waste disposal
- Food and other necessary goods. This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution and sale, as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (e.g hygiene, medical etc)
- Key national and local government including those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the Covid-19 response.