



Friday 20th March 2020

Dear parents and carers

Key workers & vulnerable children

I am writing to clarify the recent information that has come out to ensure that everyone is clear on their next steps. Overnight, the government published its latest guidance on the categories of students that schools may stay open for from next week. That advice can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Vulnerable students

The advice is similar to our expectations. We have contacted all those families that we believe are affected and asked them whether they need to attend. It is important to remember that where a student is at risk because of an underlying health condition, we do not expect them to attend.

Key workers

The definition of a 'key worker' is wider than was originally set out by the government. It now includes those working in healthcare, education, key public services, local/national government, food industries, public safety and security, transport, utilities, communication and financial services.

The guidance is very clear about the starting point:

'If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.'

Schools are closing in order that social contact is as limited as it can be. The guidance goes on to say:

'...schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.'

We would ask you to recognise that the more children that come into school, the greater the risks. That includes to the staff who have to attend to supervise.

The following questions should help to determine whether you need to ask the school for your child to come in:

1. Are you a 'key worker' as defined by the government advice?

Please check the definitions in the government advice following the link above.





2. If yes, have you confirmed with your employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, your specific role is necessary?

Not every role will be essential to continue. Please confirm this as a matter of urgency with your employer. There may be circumstances where individuals are essential only for certain days or parts of the week.

3. If you are still required to go to work, can your child be left safely at home?

For most of our older children, they will be in a position to take care of themselves and look after younger siblings. It is important that they are safe to do so. Checking in frequently with them is one way of managing this.

4. Is there someone else who can safely look after the children?

The starting point will be a partner who does not work in a key worker category. There may be others who can safely support your children. Please note the government advice, '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.'

5. If you still need your child to attend school, can this be limited to specific days or times?

We will be open from Mondays to Fridays from 8.30 to 3.30 with staff working in two sessions: 8.30 to 12 noon and 12 noon to 3.30pm. If you need your child to come to school or nursery, please confirm as soon as possible what days and sessions you will need. This will be very helpful as it helps to reduce the amount of social contact and to work out staffing.

Having read the above, if you still require your child to come to school or nursery then please email:

Sch.128@educ.somerset.gov.uk for school age children and HWestlake@educ.somerset.gov.uk and copied to LGill1@educ.somerset.gov.uk for nursery children detailing:

~ the job roles of the parents and carers;

~ the dates and sessions you require;

~ whether your child will bring a packed lunch or would prefer a meal to be provided. This would be free for those in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) and charged at £2.50 for others.

If you could do so by 3pm today (Friday 20th) that would significantly help our planning for next week. If you have already emailed in, please could I ask you to check the new criteria and to confirm what dates and times you are needing (as above). Please do not phone as we are having a high number of phone calls and limited staff today.





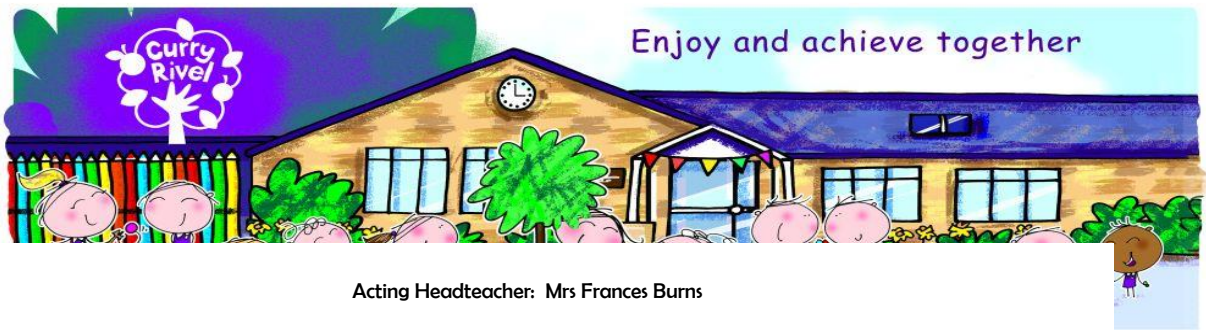
We will send a confirmation invitation to all those requests that we are able to support. Please be aware that we will be managing the capacity of the school and nursery staff as well - many of whom are now having to self-isolate or stay away for health reasons. For the purposes of Monday (23rd), only send your child to school if you have received one of these invitations.

We believe that we can manage the demand that is likely, but the late posting of the government's criteria has made it difficult for us to be certain for Monday until we have heard from everyone. Thank you for your support and understanding.

Kind regards

Frances Burns
Acting headteacher





Acting Headteacher: Mrs Frances Burns

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