20th March 2020

**Key Workers’ children following further guidance**

Dear Parents/ carers,

The information schools are receiving is changing by the hour and we only hear about changes from the Government as the general public do – so in this extremely unusual situation, we cannot plan ahead. Late last night, there was a further update from the Government.

We would like to update you following the later release last night which said:

*"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.*

*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:"***

As we are also front-line workers trying to stay open with a skeleton staff to reduce the spread we are relying on parents being able to follow the guidance above and **keep your child at home if you can.  The Government expectation is for key workers to receive support if they are unable to get support at home,**therefore if your partner is not a key worker it would make sense that they support the pandemic and look after your child.  ​This is a collective responsibility for society to ensure the educational service is protected for those that really need it.

**The purpose of the school closure is to limit the risks to our community of spreading the virus further, by reducing the number of people (children) who need to travel from place to place and be in larger groups.  This is therefore the reasoning behind the fact that those families with more than one parent/carer should only send their child(ren) to school if all parents are key workers or unless directed otherwise by any ongoing updated government guidance. As we said, if a parent/carer is not a frontline key worker, then they should be supporting your child in this time of crisis to reduce the pressure and risk of spread in the educational setting.**

If ​you still feel you need support, send an email to keyworker@heather-ridge.co.uk with relevant details (listed in last night’s letter) and return by midday today and **the school will confirm with you as soon as we know whether we are able to offer a place for your child**.  Obviously, as the government is trying to keep numbers in schools below 20% and we are just being required to provide childcare, if you can provide childcare through other means, this would support the educational front line.

**Update to who ‘Key Workers’ are:**

**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.**

Education is an essential part of our national effort to combat this disease and we all need to work together to ensure only those who really need the school places have them.

Thank you so much for your continued support to the school, through this unprecedented time.

Kind regards,

Miss Sarah Elliott

Head Teacher