

20 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As previously shared, schools have been directed to close today and remain closed until further notice **except for children of key workers and vulnerable children**, as part of the country's ongoing response to COVID-19 (coronavirus).

I am writing to confirm that at ten past midnight today, the UK Government issued the following guidance -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision>

### **GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE -**

The government is asking "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."

"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 ([in the linked document](#)).

**"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:

- If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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 ([in the linked document](#)), and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children will be prioritised for education provision.”

Further advice and guidance for parents and carers is available here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers#critical-workers>

### **At St Nicholas**

These are very difficult and unprecedented times and we continue to thank you for your understanding and for working with us at this crucial time. We will do our utmost to remain open for those children who are vulnerable or whose parents are key workers if they have no other options open to them.

If you are a key worker and planning to use our provision, please contact school on (01258) 860581 or [office@childokeford.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@childokeford.dorset.sch.uk) to let us know as soon as possible so we can start to make arrangements. We would also ask that during this time you send your child in with a packed lunch. If you are entitled to a free school meal then a packed lunch will be provided in school. Those pupils who remain in school will complete the work set by the teachers on the website to ensure consistency of learning provision so please ensure that any workbooks are brought in to school on the days that your child comes in.

Alternatively if you are the parent of a Vulnerable child then please contact us to let us know if you will be taking up this offer.

If you have any queries or questions then please let us know. I will continue to write to you with any updates and also to inform you about Easter provision.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Ms J Watson  
Headteacher