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20th March 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I am writing following my letter of 19th March 2020 to provide an update on the range of issues, including occupations that come under the government's definition of "keyworker". I am sorry that this has not arrived earlier. It was only published in the small hours of this morning.

From Monday, our schools are closed to most pupils. Please note that this means, regardless of parents' occupation, that **if it is at all possible for children to remain at home, they should be.**

This is so that we can implement, to the maximum extent possible, social distancing, and hence slow the spread of the virus.

We are committed to establishing provision for pupils whose parents are at the frontline of the fight against Covid-19.

As advised by the government, we will do all we can to stay open for the children of key workers and children with certain needs. 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 provision.

Provision:

Please note that provision will effectively be childcare. Due to significant staff absence, and the collection of different year groups in the same room, it is unlikely to be possible to effectively deliver a curriculum.

Should circumstances, such as staffing, demand it, we may need to provide this provision at an alternative venue to your child's school, for example in a local hub. As you would expect, safeguarding will remain our first priority.

We also intend to try to provide meals/meal vouchers to pupils who are entitled to free school meals but are not allowed to come to school. We are working hard on this and will be in touch. Given the short notice, we are sorry but it will not be set up by Monday but we will be in touch with those parents next week. We will let those who are entitled to free school meals know as soon as we do.

As part of our planning and preparations, to include how that affects our pupils, we are asking for your support in ensuring we have the correct information as follows – if you have supplied this information, please do not do so again:

If you are currently in the process of applying for free school meals **or** if you currently qualify for free school meals but haven't advised us, please advise us on meals@advantageschools.co.uk or

T: 01234 332277 E: info@advantageschools.co.uk Advantage Schools, 12-16 Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AD

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telephone your child's school. **You do not need to inform us if your child already receives Free School Meals.**

If your child has an EHCP **and** you are intending for your child to continue attending school, please email keyworker@advantageschools.co.uk or telephone your child's school.

Keyworker definitions:

Health and social care

This includes 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 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.

All other children will need to stay at home, so we ask that you do not send your child into school from Monday onwards.

If you, or any other adult in the house, are key workers – this includes workers in the NHS, emergency services, social care, school staff or food distribution **and** you require for your child to continue attending school in order to support you in your role please email keyworker@advantageschools.co.uk or telephone your child's school. **Please include your child's name, their school, their class or form class, your name, your occupation and the address of your workplace.**

If you are able to confirm that you require your child to attend school, we expect them to do so every day during normal school hours (and if they are absent, we require you to tell us in the usual manner each day – so if you need provision for two days, you will need to inform the school on the other three days and do so every time). If you require extended hours (from 7.30am, or until 6pm) please let us know on keyworker@advantageschools.co.uk and we will try hard to facilitate **but we are unable to guarantee this will be available.**

Please send any response ASAP.

We are extending the deadline but require a response by 5pm on Friday 20th March 2020 if at all possible, please. If you have missed this deadline, send it anyway.

I would like to repeat that it is going to be very difficult to run our schools from next week, and to sustain this. If you are entitled to use the school for childcare, and need to do so, then please do, but **please consider your child's school as a last resort** and only use it as such.

We hope to keep both of our schools open over the Easter period. Should you be a keyworker or a child with an EHCP and you require your child to attend school during the Easter period, we will write to you to confirm arrangements forthwith. We are unable to guarantee this, however.

I am aware this is an uncertain time for all of us, and I want to repeat that if this time is causing you significant difficulties, please contact your child's school.

Please refer to my letter of 19th March 2020 for arrangements for educational provision at home.

If you want to get in touch to share any concerns or if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to do so via questions@advantageschools.co.uk

Very best wishes,



Stuart Lock
CEO
Advantage Schools