

School Supervision Arrangements for children of Key Workers from Monday 23rd March

On Thursday evening, the Minister for Education made a statement outlining how schools will close from today, Friday 20th March.

However, he stipulated that schools will open with skeleton staff from Monday 23rd March to supervise children of identified key workers. This decision will have wide-reaching repercussions not only for learners and their families and for staff who work in the sector, but for our whole society.

Working with other principals across west Belfast, we have agreed to follow a co-ordinated 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 we as a school are aware of how many children of key workers will be attending school on Monday morning. With this in mind, if you are an identified key worker (check the list below) and meet the established criteria, please make contact with the school to inform us if your child will be attending. This must be **by phone before 3pm today** so that we can put appropriate supervisory arrangements in place for Monday. Before contacting school, please pay particular attention to the following points.

School will not be able to operate a 'normal' school day. We are operating with a significant reduction in staffing and this will continue to get worse over time.

Established Criteria

A list of key workers, issued by the Department of Education, is included below.

- 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.
- Schools will not have wraparound services/ breakfast clubs or after school clubs available.
- Children should NOT attend school if they or any member of their family are self-isolating.

- Children should NOT attend schools if they have any underlying health condition.
- 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 clear social distancing guidance.
- School's normal opening and closing time will apply (Monday-Friday)
- 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.
- Once schools are aware of the numbers of Key Worker children requiring supervision, they will consider how many can be accommodated according to pupil/staff ratios and social distancing guidance. If there is over subscription to any school, the schools may have to use your occupation information to prioritise a place, obviously beginning with frontline medical staff and working from there.
- Parents should only present their child at school on Monday morning if they have had confirmation from the school that a place is available for their child that day.

Unfortunately, this is not business as usual in schools and medical advisers continue to stress that **the safest place for children and staff is at home with as little social contact as possible.**

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,

P. Alexander (Principal)

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.