



**Langdon
Primary
School**

19 March 2020

Dear parents and carers

Re: Coronavirus/Covid-19

Please read this message all of the way through to the end as there are some vital 'Actions for Parents' at the end that we need a rapid response to.

We have now received guidance from the Department for Education about school closures and opening for certain children. In order to ensure accuracy of information, I have cut and pasted directly from the Department for Education's advice pages for schools and for parents. You can view this advice in full by following the links that are at the end of this letter.

Firstly, a reminder to you all, and we are very sad that this is the case at Langdon but in line with advice from the government, for the majority of pupils the school is closed from Friday 20 March 2020 until further notice.

The government have stated:

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

'That is why the government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.'

However, for some vulnerable pupils and for children of key workers we remain open for childcare between the hours of 8.45am and 3.05pm. Please note, we will **not** be providing Breakfast Club for the foreseeable future BUT if this causes a problem for you then individual parents should telephone me directly and we will try to help.

Vulnerable pupils are determined by the following criteria:

'Vulnerable children include children who are supported by social

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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'

Key Workers are determined by the following criteria:

'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.'

Please note that the guidance refers to 'essential' workers for many of the groups. As an example, local NHS trusts have already identified groups of workers who can work from home, so simply working for the NHS does not qualify a family for these arrangements.

In order to best protect the children who need to attend school and the staff during this crisis, we will be asking that childcare is requested only where there is a need according to the criteria above. As stated in yesterday's letter, we will not make any exceptions to this in order to help minimize social contact as advised. Although only one key worker in the household may qualify your child for this provision, we would expect that if there is a non-critical worker in the home capable of providing childcare during the day that the following guiding principle will apply: *'If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.'*

For parents who are sending their children into school, I would like to reassure you because I know that you may be anxious about this. It is important to state that schools remain, relatively safe places to be at the current time and parents should be reassured that we are taking every reasonable step to ensure that we limit the chances of the virus spreading in school by employing good self hygiene practices with the whole community and by ensuring a thorough and rigorous cleaning routine and I am grateful to Mrs Dodd and Mr Sear for being doggedly determined to go over and above with this at this time.

I know I am stating the obvious here and that you will already have taken this on board but the government stress the following:

'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.'

For children attending school in the next couple of weeks, they do not need to wear school uniform. We are currently trying to arrange school meals for those who usually have them and I will liaise directly with parents who have requested childcare about this.

For parents who are entitled to Free School Meals because of eligibility on the grounds of low income (please note that this is not Universal Free School Meals for all children under the age of 7) please fill in the form I sent home yesterday to let me know whether you would like us to provide food store vouchers to you during your child's absence from school in order to help with a midday meal. The government is working on a national voucher scheme for children but in the meantime we will provide individual vouchers for you. It goes without saying, I hope, that these vouchers should only be used to purchase healthy food for your child for their midday meal and they should not be spent on anything else.

Action for Parents:

If you haven't already done so, please inform the school by 5pm today, Friday 20 March 2020, if you believe that you qualify for the childcare arrangements provided by school as set out above AND whether you think that you may need them and when that will be.

Finally, for some children this could potentially be the end of the primary school journey. Anticipating that this might be the case I want to say to our current Year 6 pupils that it has been an absolute privilege and delight to know, work with and teach you. I count myself lucky that I was able to be your teacher twice during your time at Langdon. I have enjoyed watching you grow, mature and learn. Sometimes, you have given me a huge headache and sometimes you have made me laugh till I cry. The whole staff are so disappointed that they may not see you through the final days of primary school and hope with every fibre of their being that this will all blow over so that we can have a residential visit, end of school production, shirt signing day and all the other things that are a right of passage from one part of your life to the next. We will do something at some point to celebrate your time with us after all this is over and done with, if it lasts to the end of the academic year. But just in case, I wish you every success in your future education and career. Aim high and reach for the stars in all that you do - I expect you all to go far - and never forget where your journey started, here at Langdon.

Yours sincerely

Lynn Paylor Sutton
Head Teacher.

Department for Education Advice: 'Closure of Educational Settings: Information for parents and carers'
19.3.20

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

Department for Education Advice: 'Guidance for schools, colleges and local authorities on maintaining educational provision' 19.3.20

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