



BRIDSTOW CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bridstow, Ross-On-Wye, HR9 6PZ

Telephone No: 01989 562623

Head: Dan Brearey (head@bridstow.hereford.sch.uk)

DATE: 20th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, our apologies for not being able to communicate sooner with you. The government guidance on 'key workers' and 'vulnerable groups' was only published very early this morning and we have taken a short time to digest the content.

From today the school will be enforcing **social distancing** in the office. Only **one parent at a time** will be able to come into the foyer. Please stand back from the office window. We would also ask that **no parents come into the school building** from today. This is to comply with government guidance on social distancing in order to keep us all safe.

In line with government guidelines on social distancing and social isolation, it is vitally important that children **do not attend school** if at all possible. Some parents have said that they will be doing all they can to 'get their children into school.' I need to ask you **not** to do that for the sake of all children, staff and our communities. Everyone **must** follow the guidance we have been given.

If children can stay 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.

- 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 provision will be available for them. This will be **childcare** not schooling. Educational support is available via a variety of social media platforms that have gone out to parents already.
- 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. We need to keep **numbers in school as low as possible** in order to achieve this

1. Key workers' children

The very long list of key workers released does present schools with a challenge. If we are to ensure children are 'not mixing socially' then we need to ensure that numbers are as low as possible. **Please only send your child to school if you have no alternative otherwise we will not be able to keep children and staff safe and school will be forced to close entirely.** The list of key worker groups, from the DFE website, is below:

a) *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.

b) *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.



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c) **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.

d) **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.

e) **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).

f) **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.

g) **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.

h) **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. We may need to ask for proof of this in order to maintain emergency provision

2. **Vulnerable children**

The government has defined 'vulnerable children' as those 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](#).

The government has previously stated that children with a learning disability fall into a vulnerable category and should therefore not attend. It has also stated that children with underlying health conditions should not attend. This does seem confusing. If your child has an underlying health condition then they should **not attend**.



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I am urging parents and carers of vulnerable children to only attend school where there is no alternative to keep their children safe.

3. **Free school meals**

Children with free school meals who have to attend school will be provided with a meal (this is likely to be sandwiches and not a hot meal).

The school is also offering those parents with children in receipt of benefits-based free school meals the opportunity to collect a packed lunch from school (or a central venue – TBC) on a daily basis for their children. Families in this circumstance have already been contacted to ascertain numbers.

4. **Communication**

Wherever possible, we will be communicating with you on as many platforms as possible to ensure our messages are read by everyone. In the first instance we will be using texts, email, the school website and our school Facebook page to communicate. However, classes are developing more online based approaches (via apps and website like SeeSaw) to communicate with children and families not in school about their learning needs and class specific questions. As time goes on, we will be honing our specific responses to the situation and will communicate this with you all as best we can. If in doubt, please make direct contact with the school via email on admin@bridstow.hereford.sch.uk

These arrangements all have to be in place by Monday so we will be working today and over the weekend to plan and communicate with you.

5. **What should parents do now?**

- Keep your child at home unless it is essential that they attend.
- If you fit into the categories above and you have no alternative, **please contact Mr Brearey directly on head@bridstow.hereford.sch.uk to let him know the following reply to school text – a new feature - or pop in to or phone the school office) – Please respond by the end of today (if possible) so we can get an idea of numbers:**
 1. **How you qualify?**
 2. **Which child/ren it will be?**
 3. **What days/times child care will be needed?**
 4. **Will you need breakfast club or after school provision** (this is not guaranteed – but we will see what we can do!)
 5. **Any other queries relating to the list**
- Where we are unable to meet needs eg too many children that need childcare or too few staff (as a result of self-isolation, illness or infection) we will be in touch with **alternative arrangements for your child eg attending another school**

I would ask once more that only children who absolutely need to attend do so. This will give us a chance to fight this virus.

With very best wishes

Dan Brearey
Headteacher