

This matter is being dealt with by:
Colin Pettigrew
Reference: CP/MC/BB
T 0115 9773639
E cfcdirector@nottsc.gov.uk
W nottinghamshire.gov.uk

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To: Parents and Carers

Dear Parents and Carers

20 March 2020

The Coronavirus outbreak is the biggest public health emergency in a generation. It calls for decisive action of the kind not normally seen in peacetime. This is why Central and Local Government together with partners including MATs and schools are doing everything we can to tackle the pandemic and mitigate its impact. Communities across the country will need to come together to help. The overriding objective is to save lives, protect the vulnerable and support the NHS so it can help those who need it the most.

The Government is asking parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, but they are also asking schools to remain open 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.

School and Academy Headteachers across Nottinghamshire were informed at 5.00pm on Wednesday 18th March about school closures in response to the Coronavirus crisis and have been working extremely hard since to make appropriate arrangements.

Nottinghamshire County Council would like to take this opportunity to thank all School leaders and school staff for their hard work at this difficult time as they make arrangements for the many pupils who are expected to remain at home, and also for the smaller group who will need to come into an education setting.

The national rules on self-isolation for those with symptoms or those who fall into a vulnerable health category apply to education staff as well as to pupils so we are aware that schools will not have their usual compliment of staff available.

All schools and academies are endeavouring to meet these challenges in the best possible way and they are having to incorporate the changing information, advice and guidance that is coming from central government as quickly as possible. Each school circumstance is different in terms of pupil numbers and staff available.

Nottinghamshire County Council, County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP

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If your child can be, or needs to be, kept at home to protect them from the virus please do so. If your child falls into a category where education will be available e.g. during those times when you are working in a role defined as critical; please be patient early next week as these new arrangements are put into place.

These are difficult times for all of us and working together to keep people and children in Nottinghamshire safe is our priority. The situation is changing by the hour and whilst the staff at your child's school will do all they possibly can to make available provision on Monday for targeted groups, it may not be safe to accommodate every key worker's child or children on Monday as between now and then it is likely that more school staff will need to self-isolate and/or may become ill. Please be prepared to support your school community by ensuring the most critical key workers on Monday are able to work and these groups are likely to be those in the medical or social care professions and those delivering food.

Yours faithfully



COLIN PETTIGREW
Corporate Director
Children and Young People's Services
Nottinghamshire County Council



MARION CLAY
Service Director
Education, Learning & Skills
Children and Families
Nottinghamshire County Council