

20th March 2020

Dear Parents

I am now writing to let you know that we have now been instructed to close the school to almost all children after this Friday (today) until further notice.

As advised by the government, we will do all we can to stay open for the children of key workers (eg NHS staff, police, others in frontline services) and children with certain needs. Obviously keeping our staff healthy remains a priority because without them we would not have a service to provide for any children.

So can I please urge all parents who have the capacity to isolate their children by keeping them at home to do so. The government have said this in black and white, 'if children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading'.

Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response including those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined below. Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.

Please, therefore, follow these key principles:

- **If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be. If there are older siblings at home that are able to safely support younger children staying at home, this should be considered by parents**
- If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them
- 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

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors (**see Appendix I**), and you cannot keep your child safe at home, then your children will be prioritised for education provision.

Please note that this is a national closure – as you may have heard in the news – so while it is a challenging situation, we are not alone. We'll re-open fully as soon as we can and will let you know when this is by our normal communication method – school spider.

This will be a different service to normal education. It will perhaps not consist of regular lessons, so mathematics and writing will not be taught as pupils have lessons now. We will become a service to support those front line workers. Rest assured the activities we provide will be fun and educational!

School will be open from 8.40 am to 3.15 pm. Parents will be asked to drop off their children at the front entrance in the morning and they can be picked up from there at the end of the day. Hot dinners (albeit the choice will be reduced) and 'grab bags' will be provided. At this stage we are unsure whether our provider will be enabling parents to book in the usual way, however, we will endeavour to let you know as soon as possible.

Your child's continued learning is of course important to us, so we'll continue to help your child to learn by setting weekly tasks, asking parents to support children's reading by continuing to read as often as possible as well as TT Rock Stars to practice timetables. There has also been the announcement that the BBC will be running curriculum programs on their website each day.

Children whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits and are eligible for free school meals will receive grab bags (as previously notified) during the lunchtime period – 11.30 am – 1.00 pm. In addition to this, parents of children in KS1 who usually receive a meal in school, are also eligible to receive a grab bag, however, these will only be available to pick up directly from school between the hours of 12.00 and 1.00 pm from the front entrance.

This is as much as we know right now and we appreciate your continued patience as we deal with this ever-changing situation. We understand that this latest news will have an impact on you and your family and it's far from ideal, but we'll continue to keep in touch with any updates as the situation develops.

Please can I reiterate this is emergency childcare only. Your child will not be receiving an education and we will not be following the National Curriculum. This is not a statutory obligation, schools are doing what they can do to support workers and we are classed in the key worker category ourselves. This service will only be available whilst we have the staff to open safely, considering health and safety requirements.

If you want to get in touch and share any concerns, please don't hesitate to do so via email admin@rossmore.cheshire.sch.uk, as this will continue to be monitored. And remember: if you or your child feels ill and you want to know what to do next, please use NHS 111 online.

Thank you again for your continued support, and we will be in touch with more information when we can.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Davis-McCoy, Head Teacher

