Dear Parent/Carer

Late last night the Government issued further clarity regarding keeping schools open for the children of key workers and those students who may be vulnerable. The expectation is: 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. 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. Vulnerable children include children 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.

Parents whose work is critical to the Covid-19 response include 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, and every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.

Please, therefore, follow these key principles:
1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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 listed below, and you cannot keep your child safe at home, then your children will be prioritised for education provision:

- Health and social care
- Education and childcare
- Key public services
- Local and national government
- Food and other necessary goods
- Public safety and national security
- Transport
Utilities, communication and financial services

With this in mind, it is now critical that I am made aware of any student for whom we will expect to provide a place in school from Monday 23rd March and you should have received a letter to this effect earlier this morning/last night. Please appreciate that I need to keep staff and students safe and we will be reducing to a skeleton staff from next week. Therefore a clear response from those parents/carers who require our support is now urgent. If you haven’t informed us of your decision please could you let us know as soon as possible by emailing Fiona.price@parsonstreet.com. Some lunch option will be provided but no other food provision will be on offer. If you would prefer your child to have a packed lunch please send one in with them.

The school will open at 8.50am and close at 3.30pm, please note that we are unable to offer our Breakfast club or Fernandos facility during this time. Please use the Main School Office Entrance.

In the first few days/week we will provide this service at Parson Street Primary, this will ensure that our children feel safe and secure and in familiar surroundings with familiar faces. We will however look to consolidate our provision onto one site in time. This will be at Bridge Learning Campus. The children will be supported to understand what will happen and our staff will go with them and continue to support them at Bridge Learning Campus. The reason for this decision is that BLC are unlikely to be affected by staff shortages and therefore potential closure. We are looking into the transport, catering and all the other issues and will keep in regular contact with you as these plans become clearer.

We are not going to be able to provide teaching in the normal way. Initially we will provide a supervision service to ensure your child/ren are safe and occupied. In time we will be able to give you more details, however, as I am sure you can appreciate, we have had very little time to formulate plans.

Please ensure on Monday that you also inform us when dropping off your child if someone else will be authorised to pick up your child on your behalf and at what time they will be collected.

For those students who receive a free school meal and will not be on site, from Monday anyone in this group may collect a meal (this will be the Brunch bag option) from Parson Street Primary School kitchen between 10am and 11.15am. It would be helpful if you could indicate if you intend to accept this offer to enable us to plan and avoid wasting food. Please use the Fiona.price@parsonstreet.com email address. I am expecting further information regarding a proposed voucher system to support families on free school meals. When I have it, I will pass it on to you.

Can I thank you all for patience and understanding this week. We have had so many kind messages of support which have been really appreciated by the whole staff. We will continue to communicate with you as always over the next few weeks and update you via email and on the website when any new information comes to us. Stay healthy and safe.

Yours Sincerely

Ms Hopcroft (Headteacher)