

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents

We are writing to you as Head Teachers of the Kirkby Collaborative of Schools, of which your child / children's school is a member.

We all wish to stress the important messages and guidance which have been made clear by the Government as to the current situation with Schools and the increasingly obvious impact of Coronavirus Covid19 as it has developed over the weekend.

**The default position is that all Kirkby Collaborative schools are closed.** The Secretary of State has clarified his initial comments and now says that "if a child can stay safely at home, then they should be at home". Sending your child in to school otherwise, places them and all our schools' staff at increased risk. **To be clear, all our schools and Head Teachers want to support the critical workers and children deemed vulnerable at this crucial time, and recognise the role they have to play in doing this.** However, the safety of children and staff has to be the priority for all our Head Teachers.

### **Children in Care / with an EHCP**

Each of our schools will have undertaken a risk assessment and considered these children on a case by case basis. Essentially, Head Teachers will have decided, in consultation with parents, whether a child is safest at home or in school? Please respect the judgement of your Head Teacher as they will have made their recommendation based on the most up to date government guidance and their knowledge of your child. **Many children with EHCP plans can safely remain at home.**

### **Children of Key Workers**

Again, advice from the Secretary of State has been clarified on this. **There is no automatic entitlement to a child care place in school.** Please consider if your role is critical to the Covid-19 response. All critical workers will be considered for a place, **as long as their job cannot be done from home.** Even if you are a key worker yourself, please ask whether you have **ANY** other alternative childcare options. If there is a second parent / carer who is **NOT** a critical worker who can take the child care responsibilities? Are there any other family members who are not elderly? Are there older siblings who could take some responsibility for care some of the time? Sending your child to school should be an **absolute last resort; every child who can safely be cared for at home should be** if we are to tackle the spread of this virus together.

Should numbers in our schools be too high and Head Teachers believe that both children and staff are at increased risk because of this, then **all Head Teachers** will introduce a 'tiered' system for allocating places. All places will then be reviewed and considered in the light of each family's particular circumstance / job roles etc. Some places may need to be withdrawn at that point.

### **Conclusion**

Over the weekend, our schools' Head Teachers have been talking to you and emailing you with final arrangements and numbers for child care sessions at your schools early this week. If, after reading this and considering the latest government guidelines, you want to withdraw your request for a child care place and, then please contact your school's Head Teacher immediately.

All schools in our Collaborative are committed to supporting our families and children during these unprecedented times.

We are asking that you all pay close attention to government guidelines to keep you, your children and our staff as safe as possible.

Thank you for your support

Yours Sincerely

Mrs J. Ryan

Head Teacher