



20th March 2020

Dear Parents

The Minister of Education's statement yesterday on school closures included a requirement for schools to make provision for those children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and who would otherwise have no option but to stay at home to ensure safe supervision of their children. This provision is to commence on Monday 23rd March 2020. We are keen to do our bit and support those of you who need this facility to continue working in the fight against this pandemic and crisis.

To support us and help us to support those most in need and yet still safeguard appropriately, we request that, if you request this provision, you contact us with the information required. Before doing so, please consider the current guidance. Please be aware, guidance may alter later today if we receive more specific updates from the Education Minister.

Before contacting us, please pay particular attention to the following points. We will not be able to operate a 'normal' school day. There will be no teaching. We are already operating with a significant reduction in staffing and this will probably continue to get worse over time.

Points to consider

A list of key workers issued by the Department of Education is listed below. Only children with parents working as key workers, and both parents out at work at the same time should consider attending school.

- In single parent families, the main carer must be a key worker
- If possible, alternative childcare arrangements should be sought before deciding to send your child to school, for example, with other family members, friends etc.
- Please try to use schools as a last resort. This is to try to limit the number of children and adults together in a small space in line with recent social distancing guidance
- We will seek to continue this service for as long as we can but please be aware that, as with many other schools, we are already operating with significant reductions in staffing and this will probably continue to get worse over time
- Children attending will be required to wear their school uniform
- Whilst teaching opportunities will be taken where possible, schools will largely be performing childcare duties, as not all teachers are currently available to teach specific Year Groups and teachers must also be available to provide online/remote learning.
- The school's normal opening and closing times will apply i.e. 9am-2:00pm for P1-P3; 9:00am-3:00pm P4-P7. Please do not leave children in before 8:45am.

We would ask that you pay attention to the points outlined above before requesting childcare. To minimize the spread of the virus, it is essential that we keep the number of children and staff in our setting as low as possible. So while we are here to help, if you have other childcare options, please try those first.

In order to respond effectively, we need to know the number of key workers' children who will be attending on Monday morning. Therefore, if you are an identified key worker we would ask you to make contact with the school by 3:00pm on Friday 20th March to inform us that your child/children will be attending and on what days they will be here. Please identify for us how you meet the criteria for key worker status as outlined in the documentation issued to schools on 19th March 2020. You should contact us in one of the following ways:



Telephone the school on 028 4461 4145 before 3:00pm today Friday 20th March.

Send an email sent to info@stpatrickspssaul.downpatrick.ni.sch.uk

These are challenging times and we greatly value the work that everyone is doing to limit the long term impact of this potentially devastating virus. This situation is continually developing and we will endeavor to keep you informed of any future changes as promptly as possible. Please stay safe and look after one another through these crazy days and hopefully we will return to normality sooner than everyone predicts. We will continue to keep everyone in our prayers and thoughts.

M McGrath



LIST OF KEY WORKERS AS OUTLINED ON DOCUMENTATION ISSUED TO SCHOOLS

19TH MARCH 2020

Please work with us to ensure that schools operate with a limited number of children and staff.

Health and Social Care. This includes doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, home carers and staff required to maintain our health and social care sector.

Education and childcare. This includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who will remain active during the Covid-19 response

Public safety and national security. This includes civilians and officers in the police (including key contractors) Fire and Rescue Service, prison service and other national security roles

Transport. This will include those keeping air, water, road and rail transport modes operating during the Covid-19 response.

Utilities and Communication. This includes staff needed for oil, gas, electricity and water (including sewage) and primary industry supplies, to continue during the Covid-19 response, as well as key staff in telecommunications, post and delivery services and waste disposal.

Food and other necessary goods. This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution and sale, as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (e.g. hygiene, medical etc.)

Key national and local government including those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the Covid-19 response.