

Cheselbourne Village School
Cheselbourne
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 7NT



office@cheselbourne.dorset.sch.uk



01258 837306



20 March 2020

COVID-19 Update: School Closures and Key Workers

Dear Parents and Carers,

As previously shared, schools have been directed to close today and remain closed until further notice. However, we are being asked to provide provision for children of key workers and vulnerable children, as part of the country's ongoing response to COVID-19 (coronavirus). I am writing to confirm that at ten past midnight today, the UK Government issued the following guidance -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision> which clarifies the government's position of who they mean by vulnerable children and key workers.

GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE -

The government is asking "parents to keep their children at home, **wherever possible**, and asked schools to open **only** for those children **who absolutely need to attend.**"

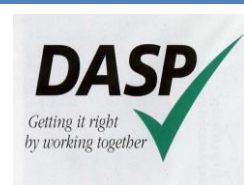
"...the fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society."

*"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 that have child in need plans, or child protection plans, are 'looked after' children, young carers, disabled children and those with education, health and care (EHC) plans."

*"Many parents working in these critical sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. **Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.** This is an offer to parents and carers and there is no requirement for parents and carers to send their children to school if they do not need or wish to do so."*

(Please see overleaf)



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Please, therefore, follow these key principles as laid out by government guidelines:

- If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
- If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker which stops a child being able to be cared for at home, 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.

Further advice and guidance for parents and carers is available here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers#critical-workers>

If you are a feel you fall into the category of key worker and have no options for keeping your child at home, then please contact me **urgently** via email at – marysee@cheselbourne.dorset.sch.uk. Anyone with questions, can also email me directly too.

The message we are getting from Dorset Council is that if there isn't the capacity for schools to provide safe provision for vulnerable children and those of key workers, then provision may be made elsewhere. At Cheselbourne, it is likely that the numbers of families that fall into this critical category and have no other option for care for their children will be very low. In this case we may have a situation where any of our children who do require care out of the home are directed to other settings. In light of this, we are also preparing for the situation that our staff may also be deployed to support in other settings where the need is greater. However, this is a very unknown situation at the moment.

I thank you for your continued support.

Mary See

Mary See,
Headteacher

