

20th March 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

I apologise that I am unable to provide all the information you require in such uncertain times in one complete and clear letter. The situation is changing rapidly and there are so many different aspects of school life that need to be resolved.

Definition of 'Key workers'

We have finally received confirmation of what the Government deem to be "Key Workers". The list is attached as a document and the link below provides you access to the Government's advice to Parents.

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

You will see that the list is quite extensive and in many ways could be considered contradictory, when considering the aims of "social distancing". I must therefore highlight the key points taken from the guidance included in the link above.

1.8 I am a critical worker or have a vulnerable child but I don't want to send my child in to school or childcare, do I have to?

- ***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.***
- ***For vulnerable children, your child's social worker will work with you to assess the best option for your child.***

To that end, I must reiterate that there is **no requirement for any pupil** to be in school and as the guidance clearly states, "**Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be**". The provision at GTS is aimed at those pupils who would otherwise have nowhere safe to go whilst their parent(s) are performing a critical role during this time. We will be staffing the school at the minimum level required to safely supervise the number of identified pupils in order to reduce the spread of the virus. I therefore need you to complete the form attached to this letter indicating if your child or children will be requiring a place. The form **must be completed online by 10:00 am on Saturday 21st** in order for us to make the appropriate plans for Monday 23rd.

Vulnerable pupils and pupils with an EHCP

As indicated in previous letters and the guidance provided in the link above we will also be providing access to the pupils in these groups. We will be contacting parents/carers directly to see if you will require the child to be at school.

Provision during closure

If you should require provision for your child for the reasons indicated above (Key Worker, Vulnerable, EHCP) during our period of closure please be aware of the following points:

- Pupils are to wear school uniform at all times
- Pupils are to register on arrival: in **C1** for KS3 pupils
 in **C2** for KS4 pupils

- All pupils should bring a packed lunch: **there will be no catering facilities and/or vending machine**
- There will be no formal lessons during this period of closure. Staff will be planning lessons for online completion, as previously outlined. Staff will only be facilitating the completion of the work set for all pupils at home.

Transport

As it currently stands, the Local Authority (LA) are indicating that the bus service will be running next week to provide transport for the pupils indicated above. However, despite our best efforts, I do need to make you aware that we are receiving inconsistent messages from the LA and bus companies; it is possible that timings may be slightly different and that a different bus company will be providing the service. **Therefore, I need to stress that if you are planning to use the school bus service you ensure that you have a contingency plan/safety plan for your child if the bus does not arrive.** I realise this is far from satisfactory, but it is the best advice I can give you at this point.

Communications

We will continue to use Parentmail for communications but I do need to advise you that the system itself is struggling, as is the Nation's broadband speeds, due to the demands created by Covid-19 so please bear with us.

We will be writing to you shortly regarding ongoing safeguarding and pastoral provision, explaining how and what you can expect from the staff at GTS during this period of closure. Pupils will also receive a detailed explanation regarding our expectations in terms of the work that must be completed at home.

The decision to close schools was a major one and is unprecedented in the UK. The impact on all our lives is significant and we must all understand we have a role to play if the measure is going to prove successful. **Please do not send your child to school unless it is essential, as indicated in the guidance above.** As parents/carers you should do everything you can to ensure your children are not mixing socially in a way that can continue to spread the virus. Children should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.

Yours faithfully



Andy Bloodworth
Headteacher