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Dear Parents / Carers,

Firstly, thank you to all the parents who have been in contact, both via electronic means and face to face discussions, praising the school staff and providing positive feedback about our efforts to communicate key messages – the comments are all very well received! As you will read in today's update, we have added to our communication plans knowing that the announcements that have just been made were extremely likely to occur at some point in time.

Having just watched the Prime Minister's speech, as well as the Education Secretary's speech in the House of Commons, the information regarding school closures (as I understand it) is as follows:

- When schools close on Friday, they will be closed until further notice for the majority of pupils.
- School should endeavour to stay open for specific groups of children. The groups identified were:
 - Children of keyworkers – NHS staff, Police, Delivery drivers etc. (As yet there is not a definitive list of Key Workers that schools have been given)
 - Families who have social workers
 - Children with Education Health Care plans (EHCPs)
- Vouchers will be provided for those eligible for Free School Meals through a National Voucher Scheme.
- Testing will not take place during this academic year.

As headteacher, I have not received any further information, other than the content of the speeches mentioned, about the specific details of these arrangements. As a starting point, it would be really helpful for the school to know if any parents think they qualify as a Key Worker and will require the school to provide a setting for their children to attend, if our staffing levels permit.

Tomorrow will be a day of strategic planning and hopefully the government will provide additional details in order to guide the plans we create.

For the children from whom the school will be closed, the following things have been set up:

Providing work for children:

- Work packs are being made available on our website in the class pages section (click the homework link). If you require a paper copy of these packs then please inform your child's class teacher. This will be in addition to the already available activities previously shared with parents:
 - Mathletics
 - Times Table Rock Stars
 - Purple Mash
 - Homework Grids for Spring (and the previous grid for Autumn)
 - Websites such as BBC bitesize <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize> - The BBC are also planning to do daily education programmes for each key stage / year group in the event of school closures
 - Through the school website, parents can see all the Spring curriculum information that is due to be covered this term. There are many activities on the internet that can support this learning.

- We will be providing children with additional reading materials – please make sure that these books are taken care of; kept in a safe place and returned to school when we reopen.
- Phonics packs have been sent home with Year 1. The phonics packs include:
 - Parent workshop slides
 - Phase 2, 3 and 5 flash cards – parents can cut these up and use them at home as flash cards.
- SATs packs have already been sent home with Year 6.

Additional Communication Strategies:

- We are setting up temporary email accounts for each class, so that parents can discuss any question relating to the work packs. Please note that any general enquiries still need to go through the admin@highwood.wokingham.sch.uk account and the admin team will forward them on to the appropriate member of staff. Once these accounts are active, the details will be shared with parents.
- We have set up video conferencing technology so that meetings between staff can continue even if they are self-isolating. This technology will also allow governors to continue with their duties without the need to be in the school building.
- My regular email updates will continue to provide families with the most up to date information.

School attendance figures for 18/03/2020 were as follows:

Pupil attendance = 71.6% 19.8% in isolation (69 children) 8.6% general school absences (30 children)

Staff attendance = 86.2% 6.2% in isolation (4 adults) 3.1% general school absences (2 adults)

We also have 4.6% of staff (3 adults) who we are shielding from the virus as they fall into the high-risk categories.

Caterlink

Caterlink's staffing capacity has been significantly reduced during this week and therefore the hot meal tomorrow will be limited to the Jacket Potato option. Please provide a packed lunch for your child if this is not something your child enjoys eating.

When the school closures were announced, I wanted to be able to provide absolute clarity to parents, but there are still a number of significant unknowns. Please bear with us while we work to answer these questions for ourselves, so that this can be relayed to you in a timely manner.

Thank you for your support

Matt Hickey

Headteacher