

# Westacre Infant School



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## **School closure and opening arrangements until further notice**

Dear Parents and Carers,

The following information has been extracted directly from the Guidance for schools, colleges and local authorities on maintaining educational provision, published on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2020. I urge you as parents and carers to read the following information and check the list on the Government Website before you decide whether to send your children into school from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.

As a country, we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

That is why the government has given clear guidance on self-isolation, household isolation and social distancing.

And the most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.

That is why the government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.

It is important to underline that schools, colleges and other educational establishments remain safe places for children. But 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, including child in need plans, on child protection plans, 'looked after' children, young carers, disabled children and those with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

We know that schools will also want to support other children facing social difficulties and we will support head teachers to do so.

Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors. Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. And every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.

Please, therefore, follow these key principles:

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.

Parents and Carers that meet the key worker criteria will be able to use our school next week. We are currently working on making sure that we have enough staff available to support your children and maximise their learning. School will be open from 8:00 a.m. for Breakfast Club and close at 5:30 p.m. for Tea Time Club if necessary. The rest of the school day will run as normal and the children will have lunch using our existing catering facilities. If you have not already confirmed your child's attendance next week, then please make contact with the school office or email.

To support families who are entitled to free school meals, we will be operating a Packed Lunch Collection Service from school. Again, we would need you to confirm this so that we can plan accordingly. Each order would need to be placed by 9:30 a.m each day and collected between 11:45 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.

Thank you again for your support and patience during this difficult time. See you all soon,



Mr Aidan Edmunds

Headteacher