

Harestock Primary School

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Dear Parents and carers,

****Important information regarding school closure****

It is with a very heavy heart that I inform you that Harestock Primary school will be **closing to most (but not all) children from the end of the school day today**, as announced on Wednesday 18th March by the Prime Minister. (Today's school run After School club and Drama club are still happening for pre-booked children),

Children will then remain at home until advice from the Government changes – we do not know at this stage when that will be.

Emergency Service operating from Tuesday 24th March (Monday is a pre-planned INSET day)

Schools are being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children, including those whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

The key message from the government which we would like to communicate to all our families is:

If it is at all possible for children to be at home then they should be. We need to work together to limit the virus spreading.

Please note the following important points:

1. There is no expectation that children of key workers have to attend school. If key workers are able to make other arrangements regarding child care, or are themselves able to work from home to look after children, this would support the school's effort to reduce the virus spreading. Childcare should not be relied upon from those who are in the social distancing category (over 70 or with an underlying health condition).
2. If you are a two parent family with only one parent needing to go to work in a key worker role, where possible, the other parent stays at home (or is already at home) and cares for your child/ren regardless of whether this parent is in a keyworker role or not.
3. If you work in shifts in a key worker role, on the days you are at home, you care for your child/ren) at home.

We hope parents and carers recognise that whilst we are able to offer an emergency service, there must be a genuine need; reducing social contact is a priority for the country and we are operating with a significantly reduced staff team. Thank you very much for your understanding and co-operation.

We will keep you up to date as things change

For those children staying at home currently, or from Monday, parents and carers have been asked to do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus and should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.



I appreciate you may be extremely worried in this extraordinary time. However, as a community we are strong together and as a school family I know we will all do what we can to support each other and our children.

The situation is likely to continue to change as more information becomes available and as staffing levels change. We will keep parents updated of any changes in relation to who can come to school, and of our intentions to re-open as directed by the Government. We will send emails and keep our website and app updated with information.

If school is still closed for most children after 20th April, further home learning activities will be emailed / posted on the school website.

We are working closely with the other schools in the area and are keeping the situation under constant review. The arrangements below will be in place from Tuesday 24 March 2020 (Monday is an INSET day) but will change depending on staff availability, local circumstances and Government requirements.

Which children may still come to school?

For as long as my staff stay healthy and are at school working, school (including the school run After School Club if places are booked as it is chargeable) will be open for the following children to attend Monday to Friday: Unfortunately from Tuesday there is no Breakfast club service.

Categories identified by the Government announcement:

- For a list of key workers, whose roles are critical to the Covid-19 response, please read all the information on this link carefully before you respond to our short survey: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>
- Children who have an Educational Health Care plan in place **or** children who have a social worker assigned to the family (if parents want to keep these children at home, that is entirely at your discretion)

If you are a parent who is a key worker and you require your child(ren) to attend school, even if on selected days only, please complete the short questionnaire using the link below.

If you are not a key worker, please do not complete the form.

If you are a key worker and can keep your child/ren at home as you are home working, please do not complete the form.

Key worker questionnaire – <https://forms.gle/sH9nsz5zEtNWHq4N9>

We would be grateful if we could have this information as soon as possible, ideally by 3.30pm today.

If you are not able to respond before 3.30pm, please do still complete the form over the weekend rather than calling the office on Monday as we will check for a final update on Monday morning.

What will the children at school be doing?

Learning opportunities will be limited due to how children may need to be organised in line with staffing availability moving forward.

Please can children returning to school next week bring their home learning packs to school and this will be their learning activities with their class teacher in the first instance?

If, during this time, your child displays symptoms of the Coronavirus, we will contact you immediately for your child to self-isolate with your family, for 14 days.



What should children coming to school bring?

As far as I am aware at the moment, the school kitchen will be open and so children can either bring their usual packed lunch or order a school dinner.

Children must wear their school uniform and bring their PE kit and a change of shoes as we aim to spend as much time outside as we can. Please ensure children wear a coat to school.

As mentioned above, Children should bring their home learning packs too.

Conclusion

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support through these unprecedented times. Please be assured that I will continue to update you as the situation changes and that we will continue to work for the best interests of the children at our school and our wider community.

I hope you understand the difficult times we currently live in, but the staff team and I have done everything possible to ensure our children stay as healthy as can be and these measures will continue for the children returning to school. Please be aware we can offer an emergency school opening at present but our offer may change at short notice in line with staffing levels available.

I wish all children and families my best wishes in the coming weeks or months and we are only a phone call away if you need any advice or support.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. J. Sankey



