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20th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers and Staff,

We are writing to provide you with a daily update with regards to ongoing coronavirus developments.

The government announced that Schools will be closed from Friday 20th March 2020, except for the children of key workers and vulnerable children, and also made it clear that those with an EHCP will have the opportunity to continue to attend School. As a School we remain determined to continue to provide our very best support to our community, with the resources that are available to us.

In this respect our plan moving forwards is as follows:

- All Five Acre Wood School sites (Loose, Palace Wood and Snodland) will be closed on Monday 23rd and Tuesday 24th March 2020.
- We will re-open on Wednesday 25th March 2020. On this date we will transfer all of our provision onto the Loose Site, due to the ever rising numbers of pupil and staff absences. This will enable us to consolidate our provision centrally. KCC Transport and individual contract providers have been informed of this plan, and have agreed that all transport will be diverted to the Loose Site from this point onwards, and for the foreseeable future.
- The closure of the School on Monday 23rd and 24th March will allow us to focus our cleaning efforts on the Loose Site. This time will also allow us to carefully consider which staff are able to work from Wednesday 25th March, and which pupils will be intending to come into School. As we are sure you appreciate, this is going to be a careful balancing act that will present us with significant challenges, given the increasing number of staff needing to self-isolate, and the needs of our pupils. Ambiguity surrounding the term 'key worker' may also hinder our plans. Our interpretation of "teaching staff" and "specialist educational professionals" is all school based staff, including our amazing Teaching Assistants, who are integral to the functioning of our School. If however, Teaching Assistants are not recognised as 'key workers' elsewhere, then they may not qualify for 'key worker' places at their own children's Schools, therefore meaning that they might not be in a position to work.

It is evident that "stay at home and save lives" has also been the government's mantra and that the aim of closing schools is to ensure 'social distancing' and to have as few pupils and staff in School's as possible. Therefore, please take note of the following:

- 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.
- 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.



We will send out a 'Google Form' to all parents / carers relating to COVID-19, in order to ascertain the pupils whose parents / carers would like them to continue to attend School. Please can you complete this as a matter of urgency in order to facilitate our future planning.

In terms of 'key workers' the DFE guidance states the following:

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors listed below, and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children will be prioritised for education provision.

If workers think they fall within the critical categories below they should confirm with their employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service.

Health and social care

This includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

Education and childcare

This includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who must remain active during the COVID-19 response to deliver this approach.

Key public services

This includes those essential to the running of the justice system, religious staff, charities and workers delivering key frontline services, those responsible for the management of the deceased, and journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting.

Local and national government

This only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the COVID-19 response or delivering essential public services such as the payment of benefits, including in government agencies and arms length bodies.

Food and other necessary goods

This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines).

Public safety and national security

This includes police and support staff, Ministry of Defence civilians, contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic), fire and rescue service employees (including support staff), National Crime Agency staff, those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas.

Transport

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

Utilities, communication and financial services

This includes staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure), the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage), information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the COVID-19 response, as well as key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services), postal services and delivery, payments providers and waste disposal sectors.

Please note we will do our very best to make provision for pupils who are safer coming into a School environment. If we are unable to do so, we ask that you respect the incredibly difficult decisions we are having to make. We will not be operating an educational provision at School in our usual way, staffing levels are going to be severely depleted and we are likely to open a day care service with the aim of keeping children and adults as safe as we are able to. Please be advised that our capacity to offer this service will be entirely dependent upon staffing capacity on a daily basis and it will therefore inevitably change each day, in line with fluctuating infection and recovery rates. We will remain in close contact with you.

It is clear that school closures may continue for some time. It may be that you do not wish your child to attend at this time but would like them to in the future. If this is the case, then please contact us at this point via office@five-acre.kent.sch.uk

As you are aware, for those pupils that remain at home during this time, home based learning activities (including online learning resources, if appropriate) have been prepared within each learning approach, carefully tailored by classes; ongoing materials will also be sent out on a regular basis.

Thank you for your patience and understanding at this incredibly challenging time. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards



Tim Williams
(Headteacher, Boughton Lane)



Richard Dalton
(Headteacher, Satellite Provision)