

19 March 2020

Dear parent/carer

Coronavirus update – school closure to most pupils

Following on from my last update, I'm now writing to let you know the Trust's action plan in relation to school closures, which will apply to all academies within Esteem Multi-Academy Trust **from Monday 23 March 2020**.

As advised by the government, we will do all we can to stay open for the children of key workers (e.g. NHS staff, police, others in frontline services) and the most vulnerable students within our school communities. Our priority is to ensure a safe place for these pupils to be during school hours.

As a Trust with special and alternative provision academies, and many pupils with EHCPs, we could view all our pupils as 'vulnerable' in one sense or another. However, as I'm sure you can appreciate, we will have extreme difficulties to face in providing staffing for all of our pupils, as our staff will also have to deal with self or family isolation and caring for their own children who are out of school. We will, therefore, have to make assessments of those families, which will need the most support.

We are waiting for the government to publish more information on the definition of key workers, but it would help us in the meantime if you could let your child's headteacher know if you think your child may fall into this category. You will be informed if your child is to continue to attend school.

All other children will need to stay at home, and we ask that you do not send your child into school from Monday onwards.

It will be the parent/carer's responsibility to advise the local authority's special educational needs transport department and taxi operator as you would during a normal school closure. Unfortunately, we do not know how long this will be for. We'll re-open fully as soon as we can and will let you know when this is likely to be via your academy's usual communication methods.

Whilst the school is closed, our duty and responsibility to safeguarding our pupils remains. Our regular check-ins with families needing a bit of extra help and support will continue throughout the period of school closure, just as if the school was open. Please do not feel offended if a member of school staff calls to check-in with you, and to speak to your child. If you have any safeguarding concerns whilst the school is closed, for your child or for any other pupil from the school, please contact your school office (Fountains High – 01283 247580 or Fountains Primary - 01283 247600) in the first instance or in an emergency Sarah Gilbert, Designated Safeguarding Lead on 07817 836867.

We are currently considering arrangements during the Easter holidays and we will confirm these as soon as we have further information.

If your child usually receives free school meals, we will also be in touch with more information about how we will continue to provide this, with support from a scheme that the government has just announced.



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Headteachers will be responsible for making difficult day to day decisions regarding their ability to open their academies to any pupils at all and to ensure that staffing levels and premises are safe. They will be in constant communication with relevant parents to ensure they have the most up to date information.

This is as much as we know right now, and we appreciate your continued patience as we deal with this ever-changing situation. We understand that this latest news will have an impact on you and your family and it's far from ideal, but we'll continue to keep in touch with any updates as the situation develops. If you want to get in touch to share any concerns, please contact your child's headteacher.

And remember: if your child or a family member is displaying symptoms of Coronavirus, then please follow the government's guidance on self-isolating and social distancing at www.gov.uk or use the NHS website www.nhs.uk and click on the Coronavirus link at the top of the page.

Thank you again for your continued support, and we will be in touch with more information when we can.

Yours faithfully

Julian Scholefield
Chief Executive Officer
Esteem Multi-Academy Trust