

20/03/2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

COVID-19 Updates – March 19th

I need to again emphasise that as far as we are aware, we have had no confirmed cases within the school community. However, we continue to have a significant number of students and staff who are self-isolating and this is increasing daily and putting a strain on our ability to maintain a working school environment.

I have received some questions from parents over the last few days regarding why some classes are open and not others? On the whole this is a result of where staff shortages are most impacting on class groups, where consistency in routines and structures cannot be maintained and/or where our most vulnerable students (medically) would be. In the vast majority of cases we should see a number of staff coming out of self-isolation by Easter and therefore some classes opening again after the Easter break.

However, I need to highlight that it is entirely possible that other staff will be isolating by this point and therefore more class closures may occur. We are doing everything we can to ensure that the school stays open but there are a number of other factors that are contributing to this situation, including; our school catering and cleaning teams and their ability to run.

Those students currently at home should have received home learning support packs directly from your child's class teacher to try and support you at home with their learning. We recognise that this will not cover every aspect of your child's learning and development, but staff in school have worked extremely hard completing these packs over the last week.

Despite the decisions made by the Government over the last few days regarding special schools and vulnerable youngsters it is not possible to have the school fully open when we do not have staff on site. If we are forced to take all students back from Monday 23rd we will have no choice but to close altogether as we would not be able to maintain a safe environment.

Based on the DfE guidance notes we need to ensure that 'Those most in need of our specialist support will have access to school', however making this judgment is incredibly complex when we have to consider not only medical/health needs but vulnerability in its wider context. We are still developing plans for Easter and again seeking further clarification from the LA.

We will be sending out information later today requesting information about 'Key Workers' based on the new government list published last night. **We need to know as a matter of urgency whether your child will be coming to school on Monday 23rd of March.**

Moving forward we will be requesting that you contact the school at least 24 hours prior to intending to send your child in to school.

Please note they should not be coming to school if they are currently within self-isolation. We also strongly advise that students with complex medical needs continue to self isolate and socially distance.

We are currently reviewing staffing and student absence on a daily basis to assess which classes we may be able to open or have to close. **Please can you inform the school office if you are thinking about sending your child back to school at any time, as this could have a significant impact on the school remaining operational and providing the right levels of staffing ratios. We will continue to monitor the 7-14 day isolation periods that both staff and students should be following.**

We would continue to recommend and encourage that those students with the most vulnerable conditions continue to socially distance for the advised 12 week period.

As a parent/carer of a child in the school please continue to make an individual risk assessment for your child and to then decide whether you would like to send them into school. We have been working closely with the LA and other special school settings and would ask you to consider the following underlying conditions when completing a risk assessment:

- Asthma or any respiratory needs.
- Low immune system.
- Neuro developmental conditions (epilepsy) that may result in respiratory complications.
- Heart disease/conditions.
- Diabetes.

We have made this decision based on the guidance regarding vulnerable groups and social distancing.

Class closures from Monday 23rd March other than for children of critical key workers (except Wouldham);

- **All Nexus Wouldham Classes including children of critical key workers (until Thursday 26th earliest)**
- **Nursery class - Until After Easter break.**
- **Puffin**
- **Knole**
- **Wakehurst**
- **Kingfisher**
- **Hummingbird**

We will review these class closures on Monday and will be making an informed decision as to whether we can reopen some class groups fully depending on the number of staff and students.

We will continue to review our provision in line with the latest government guidelines. We take our duty of care extremely seriously and every decision we take will be with the very best interest of your child in mind.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support and understanding as we navigate this constantly changing and developing situation. Please be assured that we endeavour to keep you updated as soon as we are able, however I am currently unable to respond to all individual parent emails and queries.

Yours sincerely,



Scott Jarred - Headteacher