

Coronavirus (Covid-19)

Dear Parents and Carers,

PROVISION during the shut down of schools

As you are aware the decision has been made to close schools and we have confirmed that Somerset will be closed for the majority of children from Friday 20th March 2020 for the foreseeable future.

Somerset will be open for vulnerable children and children who have parents who are key workers after the Easter break.

In relation to 'vulnerable children' this relates specifically to those children who have or are on track for an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and/or those with a social worker. An element of discretion is involved with this (for example, a small number of children with or on the trajectory for an EHCP may be better cared for at home) and the governors will make decisions on a case-by-case basis. Guidance on this so far is that this should initially be limited to those who are considered as 'highly vulnerable'. As we establish take up and capacity we will then evaluate and decide whether our offer can be extended.

In relation to the phrase 'key workers'.

The highest priority will be for families where **both** parents are key workers or where the **sole parent** is a key worker, but Somerset Governors reserve the right to make decisions based on individual family circumstances and in response to our support of the wider local/national effort in these unprecedented times.

We have received some guidance from unions liaising with the Government, which is copied below for your information. In order to ensure that the safeguarding of all pupils and staff can be maintained in these difficult circumstances, and to adapt whilst those become more clear, Somerset will operate the following:

On-site provision will be offered to:

- all children with or on track for an EHCP whose parents/carers would like them to attend and for whom there are the appropriate one-to-one staff
- all children with a social worker unless agreement is reached with the family and the social worker that this is not the best provision for their wellbeing
- all children in families where both parents or the sole parent is a key worker and
- a small number of additional children who the school consider to be vulnerable and whose circumstances the governors consider as exceptional

On-site provision will be extended if capacity has been confirmed to:

- children who have significant additional SEN for whom provision at school is considered by the staff to be preferable where possible
- children in families where at least one parent is a key worker to support the wider local and national response to the crises
- children who are considered vulnerable by their families despite not fitting in the categories above and for whom evidence has been submitted – this will need to be agreed by the Somerset Staff and Governors
- children of staff who are working at Somerset, where their own schools are not offering spaces and where provision for them will not involve additional staffing.

If children can stay safely at home they should, this is 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.

If you think you are a key worker or you feel your child absolutely needs to attend, please contact the school admin@somerset.wandsworth.sch.uk

Currently most families of children at Somerset have chosen to self-isolate. Before Monday 20th April we will contact families of key workers and vulnerable children to establish their intent to return to school. The school is flexible to react sooner, should the need arise.

