

19 March 2020

Dear All

Castleman Academy Trust



Thank you to you all for your response to our update last night. As you can imagine, our reactions to this situation can change at any time and often leads to more questions than answers, but your patience and understanding is deeply appreciated.

Indefinite School Closure – Friday, 20 March 2020

It is vital that we all understand that schools have been instructed to close schools, for nearly all pupils, in order to slow down and stem the spread of the Coronavirus.

We have been asked to stay open to a **small number of pupils** so that public services can continue in these unprecedented times. These pupils are either **those that are considered most vulnerable** (*Schools will decide which children they consider to be most vulnerable and this will include factors such as those with an EHCP and those with an assigned social worker*) or **those who live with adults who are 'key workers'**.

We are still awaiting guidance about who a key worker may be however, those of you who are **key workers (under the current definition), have a responsibility to keep your children at home if you have access to appropriate child care**. For example, if your spouse does not work, your children should remain at home. If you are a key worker, but are not working during school time, you should keep your child/ren at home.

At the time of writing, we still have not been given the government's list of who is considered a key worker. We do expect it to change from what was identified yesterday. Should your role be identified as a key worker after we close tomorrow, please do call us before bringing your child to school. We need to ensure we have adequate staffing levels in place to cater for demand.

There is also some confusion over whether this provision is only offered to those children where "ALL adults living with them are identified as key workers". We are seeking clarification on this matter, but will need to review our arrangements when clarification is provided. A number of parents who are key workers have already opted to keep their children with them in order to help reduce the spread of infection and to reduce pressure on an already diminished staffing capacity. We are grateful for this.

Staff will be talking with your youngsters today and tomorrow to prepare them for staying at home. They will be providing activities for them to do and we are continuing to develop this. We have provision in place to support you up until 20 April 2020 (when the Easter break would have finished) at which time we will provide further information about other activities. We will keep in touch with you and you will be able to phone us should you require any advice about how to support your children.

Last Day Arrangements

The children have been told that Friday (tomorrow) is a free dress day and that in return, we ask that families send an item that we can donate to a food bank. There are many in our community experiencing great hardship and if you can spare an item that would help someone in this position, it would be HUGELY appreciated. We will make sure they get to the people who most need them.

As ever, thank you for your help and understanding. I do appreciate the difficulties and concerns for you all and know you will help us to support all in our community to remain safe and well.

Yours sincerely,

Rhonda Moore

Chief Executive Officer

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