



VALLIS FIRST SCHOOL

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Frome

Somerset

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Dear Parents/Carers

Key workers & vulnerable children

Overnight, the Government has published its latest guidance on the categories of students that schools may stay open for from next week. That advice can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Vulnerable students and students with an EHCP

We have contacted directly all those families.

Key workers

The definition of a 'key worker' is wider than was originally set out by the government. It now includes those working in healthcare, education, key public services, local/national government, food industries, public safety and security, transport, utilities, communication and financial services.

The guidance is very clear about the starting point:

'If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.'

Schools are closing in order that social contact is as limited as it can be. The guidance goes on to say:

'...schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.'

We would ask you to recognise that the more children that come into school, the greater the risks. That includes to the staff who have to attend to supervise.

The following questions should help to determine whether you need to ask the school for your child to come in:

1. Are you a 'key worker' as defined by the government advice?

Please check the definitions in the government advice following the link above.

2. If yes, have you confirmed with your employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, your specific role is necessary?

Not every role will be essential to continue. Please confirm this as a matter of urgency with your employer. There may be circumstances where individuals are essential only for certain days or parts of the week.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility – Vallis First School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children and we expect all members of staff, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment.

3. If you are still required to go to work, can your child be left safely at home?

For most of our older children, they will be in a position to take care of themselves and look after younger siblings. It is important that they are safe to do so. Checking in frequently with them is one way of managing this.

4. Is there someone else who can safely look after the children?

The starting point will be a partner who does not work in a key worker category. There may be others who can safely support your children. Please note the Government advice, 'Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with certain underlying health conditions.'

5. If you still need your child to attend school, can this be limited to specific days or times?

Some parents have already confirmed that they only require their child to be looked after for a limited time/number of days. This is very helpful as it helps to reduce the amount of social contact.

Having read the above, if you qualify as a Keyworker and your child absolutely needs to attend school then please email: vallisfirstschool@educ.somerset.gov.uk. If you could do so by midday every Friday that would significantly help our planning for the following week.

Please be aware of the following:

We will be open from 8.30am to 3.00pm

Children will need to come in and leave through the KS2 entrance

Children will not be allowed in school if they have a cough or temperature or are unwell

Children do not need to wear school uniform

Children will need to bring a packed lunch, snack and water bottle with them

Thank you for your support and understanding.

Nick Firkins
Headteacher

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