



20th March 2020

Dear Parent / Carer,

Following the announcement from the Education Minister I can confirm that our Nursery School is now closed to all pupils from Monday 23rd March onwards, as we try to work together to respond to the Covid-19 crisis that we find ourselves in.

Schools have been asked, where viable, to contribute to the community response to this crisis by remaining open for specific groups of children, to enable parents who are front-line, key workers, to continue with their valuable roles in these very challenging circumstances. The governors and staff of our Nursery School support this effort whole heartedly and as such, we would like to invite parents of children in our setting, who are key workers to avail of this service, if it would assist them in carrying out vital roles in our health service or in other key services, as identified by the Education Minister.

The Education Minister's definition of a 'key worker' can be found at <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/news/letter-minister-education-education-sector>. I would ask parents to access this information when deciding whether they consider themselves eligible for this service. In addition to this information, and to help us to ensure that we can keep numbers of children low enough to be able to achieve 'social distancing' for staff and children, as far as possible, I would also ask parents to consider the following points -

- Only children with **BOTH** parents working as Key Workers and only when both parents are at work **AT THE SAME TIME** should their children attend school. Parents should specify which days they will require the service, depending on both parents' work schedules.
- In one parent families, the main carer **MUST** be a Key Worker and be required at work.
- Every alternative childcare arrangement should be explored before deciding to send children to school. If you have family, friends or alternative childcare arrangements currently in place, you should continue to use these. School should, in effect, be a LAST RESORT to enable us to keep the number of children in Nursery to a minimum and to comply with Public Health Agency advice on social distancing.
- Provision of any level of service will be dependent on staff availability at the given time.
- Our Nursery School will be available for the children who need it, between the hours of 9.00am and 3.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Details regarding the outworking of this provision are still to be finalised, however I am asking that parents who are 'key workers' and would like to be considered for a place for their child in our setting to inform us, via this email address, **as soon as possible**, to enable us to give careful consideration and planning to the service that we can provide in our Nursery School at this time.

Please note that we will consider each case individually and will respond to parents over the weekend, to inform them if a place can be made available in Nursery for their child, beginning on Monday 23rd March.

Sending our best wishes to you and your families in the coming days and weeks,

Pamela Muir