



Leppington, Birch Hill, Bracknell, RG12 7WW
Headteacher: Michael Dillon B Ed (Hons) MA

Friday, 20 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

As you know, we will be closing the school at the end of today and we do not know when we will reopen fully. It has been, and continues to be, a very challenging time for all of us and I hope that the communication from school has been helpful. Please note that this is a rapidly changing situation and advice, guidance and information is being updated regularly.

Please note, if children are able to stay at home safely, they should. The fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society. The guidelines are clear that the closure of schools is in place to limit the spread of the virus.

As a school, we are happy to support you in any way we can.

With regard to sending your children to school from next Monday the government have issued the following key principles:

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.
3. 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 underlying conditions.
4. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors listed below (see link), and you cannot keep your child safe at home, then your children will be prioritised for education provision. A full list of those considered to be Key Workers 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>

Thank you to those parents who have already emailed us with a request for a Key Worker place. However, Bracknell Forest Council have taken the difficult decision to limit the attendance in schools, as supported by the Department for Education, to best protect our local community. We need to ensure that we are supporting those key workers who really cannot provide childcare at this very challenging time.

Therefore, for the next two weeks, until the Easter holidays would have started, we will prioritise those children where **both** parents are key workers and single key worker parents.

All parents must email us again! secretary@birchhillprimaryschool.co.uk, if both of you are Key Workers, or single Key Worker Parent. The office will email parents with an offer of a space over the weekend and you will need to provide evidence as soon as possible. If you do not receive a confirmation offer, you must not bring your child to school.

We will send more guidance regarding Home Learning and provision for children entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) later this evening.

We appreciate this is a difficult time for children and parents. We also need to ensure that school staff are able to provide the service required. These are the current plans. Further arrangements are being made for the Easter holidays and the summer term. We will continue to keep you informed as much as possible as the situation continues to be reviewed.

Thank you to everyone in the community who is following the government advice in these unprecedented times and for your understanding and patience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Dillon". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michael Dillon
Headteacher

Definitions of terms

Vulnerable children: Children who are supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs, including child in need plans, children with child protection plans, 'looked after' children, young carers, disabled children and those with education, health and care (EHC) plans.