

St James' Primary School

Main Road, Biddenham MK40 4BD

Telephone: 01234 352721

Email: office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk

Website: www.stjamesprimary.org.uk



ST JAMES'
PRIMARY SCHOOL

20th March, 2020

Dear Parents,

'...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...

But 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.' DfE 19.3.2020

Further to previous letters I write to finalise arrangements regarding our imminent closure.

As you know, the Government has announced closure of all schools for the foreseeable future. We are not aware of any time frame, but this closure is likely to last for a significant amount of time.

Schools have been asked to make reduced provision for children in certain, specific groups, including those children of parents who are key workers, required to continue working in order to maintain basic key services. Please be aware that we have been asked to make this provision, it is not a mandatory requirement, however we are happy to support essential workers with child care for as long as we are able/needed.

The Government published information regarding key workers late last night, please refer to this document to decide whether you are considered a key worker or not. You may also need to consult with your employer to confirm.

<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 everyone who responded to our request for information yesterday. We believe that around 40 families will be eligible for our reduced provision, approximately 25% of our school roll – this is a much higher number than the Government has expected (10%). If we haven't heard from you, then we have assumed you will not require our support and a place has not been made available for your child. **For those keyworkers who have contacted us, your child has a place.** We will not be providing a service for those parents who need to go to work, it is for essential keyworkers only.

Although we are here to support children of key workers, you must only use our provision if the following criteria apply and we expect you to work with us to reduce numbers in school as much as possible:

- You are at work
- You are unable to provide care at home for your child – this means if your child's other parent is able to care for your child, then you should expect to do so, even if that means they have to take time off work. The Government is clear in its expectation that everyone takes steps to reduce social contact.

At this stage, I do not have clear details about how lunches will be provided for these children, but food will be available for those children who require it. It is also unclear whether we will be able to offer our usual wrap around care, so on Monday we will offer a school day from 8.30am until 3.30pm. Should these timings present particular problems, please contact me as soon as you are able as I'm sure we can work out a solution. We will be working to finalise specific details for the longer term as quickly as we are able.

Children entitled to Free School Meals will not be able to attend this reduced provision. At some point we will receive information about vouchers to support these families, and we will contact you further when we know more. It is our understanding that vouchers will not be made available for those in receipt of Universal Infant Free School Meals (ie children in YR-2)



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This means that for most children, **school will be closed from Monday onwards.**

We would ask for your patience and understanding whilst we work to finalise arrangements. On Monday, we will start updating our school website with information for those of you at home, including home learning activities. Today, our priority is planning for our reduced provision and ensuring our children have a good, last day together.

Whatever comes next, please remember that we will be here. For keyworkers, please let us know what we can do to help you in your roles, particularly those of you who are working in the NHS and police services; we promise we will do our very best to support you. For those of you at home, we will be working to stay in touch with you and finding ways in which we can stay connected. You are our family, and we love you all.

Finally, one of our parents sent me this earlier in the week – please read it and take good care.



Rocky Mountain Buddhist Center

10 hrs · 🌐



"And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

"And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

"And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed."

~Kitty O'Meara

With very best wishes,

Maria Soulsby

Maria Soulsby

'It takes a village to raise a child.'

