

“Committed to Safeguarding”

### Update on Schools response to COVID-19

Dear Families,

As you know, we are all facing extraordinary challenges at this time and the situation is placing pressure on all parts of society. Our staff have been doing all they can to keep our school open, since this crisis began and I would like to pay tribute to their remarkable commitment to our young people. They have been extraordinary and we will continue to play our part over the coming weeks.

We have been notified that the guidance the Local Authority agreed yesterday with the Department for Education around support for parents from Monday onwards, has been superseded and this letter outlines the current position (March 20<sup>th</sup> am).

The most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 remains clear. The government have requested these key principles are followed:

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home safely, then they should be.
2. Parents should not rely for childcare on those ‘who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category’. This includes grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
3. 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.

The Government has requested that all schools provide **optional** care for a **limited number of children**.

From Monday, the school will continue to be open for the following groups of students **where we have capacity** to do so:

- Children whose parents are frontline workers.
- Those classed as what the Secretary of State described as “vulnerable children”. These **could** be those who have a social worker and those with EHCPs, **but** only where it is **safer** for them to be at school than at home- we have a duty to limit social contact wherever possible to stop the spread of the virus.

For students in these groups, the Government have also asked us to try to remain open through the Easter holidays and we will do our best to achieve this. From Monday 23 March 2020 and through this period, our school will use our remaining workforce capacity

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(those staff who are well and who are not in a risk category) to provide care for these children for as long as we are able to do so.

I hope you will recognise the difficult times schools and our staff now face. We are called on to provide emergency childcare at a time when many teachers' and support staffs' first thought will be to remain with their families and children. It is essential that we will all pull together to support our emergency services and key workers and you can do this by minimising your call on our limited reserves. Therefore, children who can be cared for safely away from school or would be safer at home due to their medical vulnerability should remain at home at this time. **I must stress, schools are closed for public health reasons and this childcare is an emergency measure only.** Please support our staff and each other by respecting the need for key workers to have priority access to appropriate childcare at this time.

We will contact all our families who have a child at home during this period on a Monday and Thursday by phone. You can also contact us in an emergency using the following email address or mobile number:

[help@phoenix.peterborough.sch.uk](mailto:help@phoenix.peterborough.sch.uk)

07958066712

We will also be able to provide a 'packed lunch' to our pupils who currently receive Free School Meals until the government establish their proposed food voucher system. If your child is eligible, we have already been in touch with you.

I want to reiterate the key message about the closure plans: **Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.** We absolutely understand that families are worried about being able to work but these are extraordinary times and we are all having to make some very difficult decisions and sacrifices. However, with the challenges we face with our own staff and the national social distancing policy, we wish to minimise any risks and the number of students attending should only be in circumstances where it is essential.

This remains an ever-changing situation and the position may well change again in the future. We will continue to update you as the need arises.

In the meantime, I would once again like to take this opportunity to thank you wholeheartedly for your understanding and ongoing support in helping us to manage this unprecedented situation.

Kind regards,

*Charlotte*  
Charlotte Whysall  
(Headteacher)