



WOOKEY PRIMARY SCHOOL
And Little Acorns Playgroup
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Dear Parents,

We have now received clear guidance from the Government on how schools are being asked to operate from Monday. A full copy of this guidance 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>

The guidance states:

- “If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.”
- schools should “remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.”
- “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.”

Schools are, therefore, being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

The Government has defined “vulnerable children” as:

“children who are supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs, including child in need plans, on child protection plans, ‘looked after’ children, young carers, disabled children and those with [education, health and care \(EHC\) plans](#).”

When considering “Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response”, the guidance document refers in detail to the categories of workers to whom this definition should be applied. For children of these parents the Government is asking us all to follow these principles:

- If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.



A second guidance document has also been published, which I would encourage you as parents to read:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

This document addresses many of the questions you may have about the arrangements that will be put into place from Monday.

It has been clear as the situation has developed over the past week that many of our parents are choosing to follow the Government recommendations that every child who can be cared for safely at home should be, as yesterday (Thursday) we had around 50% of the children with us in school.

Yesterday we asked for parents to self-identify as potential critical workers and we had several positive responses. I want to reassure these parents that we will be able to provide support for them to continue with their roles over the coming weeks.

It is clear from the more detailed guidance that has now been published that more parents may now fit into the definition of critical worker and may need our support as they may not be able to care for their children at home in the coming weeks.

I would urge any parents who have not come forward to do so by emailing the school office this morning SCH.423@educ.somerset.gov.uk. I would also ask for these parents, and all parents who contacted us yesterday to give us an indication of what amount of support (days and times) they will need us to offer childcare from Monday. Childcare will be available to support any critical worker parents for whom school is the only safe option for childcare. If it is possible to keep children at home, families should do so.

Yours Sincerely,

Andrew Marsh
Headteacher

