

23.3.20

Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you to all parents for their understanding and support at this difficult time. We will try to keep in touch with parents via letters and phone calls but please do check our website www.danescgatecommunity.org.uk regularly as this will be my most reliable way of keeping you informed about what is happening in school.

The Government have up-dated their guidance to schools. I have put a copy of the full guidance on the website but the opening paragraph says:

We have asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to 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.

In order to support the country's efforts to reduce the spread of the virus we are considering closing the school completely on a Monday and a Friday from 30.3.20. We would continue to run whole school days for pupils eligible for education under the Government's criteria (see my letter dated 20.3.20) on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Reducing the timetable in this way will allow me to reduce pupil movement and also to manage the gaps in staffing (these are increasing as staff have to self-isolate or be at home with their own children) better than I can over 5 days. It would also mean that staff and families had a 4 day stretch in which they can check their own symptoms and communicate decisions about any new periods of self-isolation. If you are a parent who has a pupil on the vulnerable list or whose work is critical to the Covid-19 response and would find it impossible to manage with a 3 day school week please email me direct so I can reflect on this option.

I am merging some groups in response to staff absence. From 30.3.20 I will be merging the primary Kestrel groups to run a Y1-3 group and a Y4-6 group. The Y1-3 group will run at our KS1 setting in Bishopthorpe. The Y4-6 group will run at our Kestrel House setting at Poppleton Road Primary School. Kestrel staff will be ringing parents to talk this through over the next couple of days.

Please remember that the Government is urging everyone to social distance themselves as far as is possible. Please help with this task by keeping your son or daughter at home if at all possible. It is not compulsory that you send your son or daughter in even if they are eligible for education at this time. We will ring you once a week to check what support you think you will need for the week following.

Free school meals. If your son or daughter is eligible for free school meals we are planning to deliver at least a packed lunch to your house each day using our minibus drivers. We are trying to get supermarket vouchers for you as well but these have not come through as yet. Everyone with a child eligible for a free school meal will have had a phone call from school today asking if they wish for a deliver from tomorrow.

GCSEs – all examinations have been cancelled and we are waiting to hear how exam boards will collect information from teachers to inform decisions about GCSEs.

Thank you to everyone for all their support and encouragement at this time. I will keep the web-site up-dated on a daily basis. Please don't hesitate to ring school or email you son or daughter's key worker if you are anxious about anything or have any queries or concerns. My email address is tricia.head@york.gov.uk if you need to contact me.

Best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tricia Head', written in a cursive style.

Tricia Head
Headteacher