



19 March 2020

**Update relating to COVID-19  
REPLY NEEDED FROM PARENTS IDENTIFIED IN THIS LETTER**

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to you following yesterday's announcements by the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson). The decisions made by government have undoubtedly meant there have been a number of unprecedented implications for our school, our local community and for our country as a whole. We are in uncharted territory and the landscape is changing significantly on a daily basis. It is my role as the headteacher and our role as a team of staff, to navigate through these challenging times and to offer as much clarity as possible amidst much national unrest and confusion. Last night, the Prime Minister's announced that schools will close from Friday 20 March, with some very important exceptions. Please can I ask that you read the letter carefully and in full, as responses will be required from a section of our parents and carers, that will be vital in our planning tomorrow and going forward.

The Prime Minister has asked schools to seek to provide a safe and secure place during the day for **children of key workers and children with an EHCP or an allocated social worker**. It is clear that the country will rely heavily on schools, the NHS and many others, to ensure the country is ready and able to tackle this national crisis. We have not been offered a definitive list of key workers yet but we have been told this will be made clear at some stage today. Once this list is made available, we will share it with you. What we would like to stress is that we want to do all we can to support our parents, our community and anyone who is delivering those vital 'frontline services'. This morning I held a staff briefing with my team of staff and I am confident that we will work together, as we always have, to meet the needs of our students.

Last night, schools received initial guidance via email as to who is defined as a key worker. Please could you take a moment to consider whether you would identify yourself as a key worker. If you do, and you are unable to make alternative childcare arrangements, I ask that you undertake the following steps as numbered below **by 10.30 am on Friday 20 March**, to aid us in preparing a plan for our school. It is important to note that we are trying to minimise this number to support the manageability of these arrangements and prevent further spread of infection. **We would ask that requests for supervision are only made where all other options have been considered.**

1. I identify myself as a keyworker
2. Email school@haslingdenhigh.com with your name and your child's name
3. Clearly state your job, your employer, a contact number for your line manager and what 'key worker' role you undertake
4. The days and specific times you work each week
5. Let us know what day(s) and times (am and/or pm) you would require support
6. State whether it would be essential due to your circumstances, that you would need 'holiday care' during the Easter and May holidays\*

\*We cannot confirm at this moment if holiday care will be available and I am already aware that this will present some specific challenges to school, however; I will be endeavouring to work to provide it, if it is possible and safe to do so.

For those children who have an EHCP or an allocated social worker, we will offer the same service as for children

*'Achievement for All'*

of key workers. If you wish to 'take up' this offer, please can you complete the steps outlined below:

1. Email [school@haslingdenhigh.com](mailto:school@haslingdenhigh.com) with your name and your child's name
2. State whether you need to 'take up' this offer of support
3. If you answer yes to question 2, please could you let us know what day(s) and times (am and/or pm) you would require support

The government advice is that **'children who do not fall into these groups should remain at home with appropriate care'**.

Mr Clarke has included a specific page of advice in this term's Haslingden Highlights magazine and this will be made available separately on the school website by early next week. It provides a list of some useful websites and resources that will help students to keep themselves safe and to support parents in having appropriate conversations. It has a focus on the need to carefully consider online safety and some useful links to inform discussions at home. In addition, our school website offers a wealth of useful information on our '[Pastoral Advice](#)' section.

Where possible, keeping your family at home is the safest way of preventing the spread of the virus and from catching it. In the letters dated 11 and 16 March we explained how work will be set by the school for your child going forward. Teachers held specific meetings on Wednesday 18 March to finalise their plans and work will be in place to share with students. The work will be posted on Show My Homework for Year 8-13 and on Edulink for Year 7 and specific instructions will be offered on those sites. This may require students to use other software, webpages or their exercise books. Mr Roper has invited any parent to contact him where there may be difficulty accessing [Show My Homework](#) or [Edulink](#) via his email [jroper@haslingdenhigh.com](mailto:jroper@haslingdenhigh.com). There is also helpful advice on the school website for both the online platforms.

We are also investigating how we can support children who are eligible for free school meals. We had discussed this as a senior leadership team prior to the announcement yesterday and hope to ensure that an equivalent to the normal school lunch is offered to all those who would normally receive this free during the school day. The government has outlined their commitment to supporting children eligible for free school meals through a national voucher scheme but we have not been informed of any specific plans as yet. We hope to receive instructions before school closes on Friday and will of course, share these plans with you as parents.

Today we will be organising for those who are currently loaning an iPad, to take it home as a device for learning. We have also issued all students with an additional blank exercise book. We hope that students will continue to use their subject specific exercise book for the work issued by class teachers but wanted to ensure there was additional paper should it be needed.

Beyond the immediate practical arrangements of school closure, last night's announcement also confirmed that the Department for Education will not go ahead with assessments or examinations in May and June of this year. Whilst we welcomed an update, we are acutely aware of the negative impact this may have on so many of our students and staff, who have worked tirelessly, not only in recent weeks but over several years to prepare for these examinations. Gavin Williamson made a [further announcement](#) this morning that began to answer some of the questions all schools have been seeking clarity on and confirmed that there will be no GCSE or A-Level examinations for students in Years 11 and 13. We are currently lacking the specific details as to how individual grades will be awarded and there is significant pressure from the profession, asking the government to make this process clear. In the meantime, we are asking all students to complete all work set and ensure that they preserve their work as this may form part of a wider moderation process in the future. More details will be provided in due course.

Added to this uncertainty, it also remains unclear as to how long schools will be closed for and whether Friday

*'Achievement for All'*

could be the last day for some of our Year 11 and 13 students. I am sure we can all agree that this would not be the way any of us would wish to part company given the fantastic relationships we have forged throughout that time. The prom, due to its timing in the academic year, remains in doubt and we will be discussing alternative opportunities to adequately facilitate celebrations and goodbyes. This will be an upsetting time for many and we changed the planned assembly arrangements to meet with Year 11 and 13 this morning to offer our support and field any questions they may have.

In terms of our staff, who have worked diligently and professionally over the past few weeks, I want to publicly thank them for their positive approach to this unprecedented national crisis and I look forward to working closely together with them over the next days and weeks to refine our plans. We now know the part we must play in this crisis and I am confident we will, as we have done so many times, find a way to succeed in the most demanding of situations.

I would like to ask for your direct support as parents and politely request that over the next two days, as we busily plan for the next few weeks and months, please only contact the school office or email if absolutely necessary. This will help us to focus on the essential jobs we have to undertake in a very short space of time. I have tried to provide as much information as possible in this letter and also highlight the information we are currently lacking, to prevent repeated questions arriving in to school that we simply cannot answer at present.

We will continue to try to support our children and their families in difficult circumstances and do all we can to keep our community safe. Please can I ask that you do all you can to stay safe and would urge that you act in accordance with the latest government advice. Finally, to consider, where possible, how you can add value to your local community, particularly to those who are most vulnerable at this immensely difficult time.

With very best wishes



Mark Jackson  
Headteacher