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Parents and Carers

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Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will know, the Government took the decision to close schools from Friday 20 March. Arrangements were made by our schools to make sure children who are particularly vulnerable, or whose parents are critical to the country's response to Covid-19 and cannot be safely cared for at home, are still able to attend a local school.

On Monday 23 March, all schools in the city were able to remain open to provide a place for this limited number of pupils. I wish to thank them for their incredible hard work in making this happen, and thank parents and carers for their understanding and support during this challenging time for us all.

The Prime Minister's announcement on 23 March in which he asked the population to stay at home meant even fewer of the children who were identified as needing a school place were in school on Tuesday 24 March.

I am writing today to give you some more information about school place arrangements for vulnerable children and those children whose parents are directly involved in the critical work of keeping the country safe and well.

The main message remains:

If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.

Nottingham City Council has been working with all of the city's schools and academies to make this happen. As we continue to do this work and respond to increasing numbers of people being directly affected by the virus we want to make sure:

The right children are in the right place, at the right time.

So, school places will be available if:

1. You are a parent whose work is, or has become, critical to the response to Covid-19 and your child **cannot** be safely looked after at home by your partner or other member of your household, whilst you are actually at work
2. Your child has a disability and is covered by an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
3. Your child is vulnerable and is supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs, including child in need plans, on child protection plans, children in care and young carers

While we want fewer children to be in school to stop the spread of the virus, schools are safe places for children to be. School staff will make sure that guidelines supporting the safety of children and themselves are strictly observed.

1: Parents who are critical to the Covid-19 Response

The government has made clear that only people who work in **essential services** should be making journeys to work. If your work is critical to the Covid-19 response, and you are unable to undertake your work at home, and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your child will be prioritised for education provision. Details of how to access a place are on the following sheet.

2: Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan

Children with an EHCP in all health categories, including the most vulnerable, may continue to attend education or a childcare setting as usual **if a risk assessment has determined this is appropriate**, taking on board the views of parents.

3: Vulnerable Children

While the parents of many vulnerable children have opted to keep their child at home, there is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will continue to attend an education or childcare setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at severe risk.

It is important to stress: **if your child is under social care, or has an EHCP, that a risk assessment should be done to determine whether they should stay at home or go to school. The risk assessment should be done with you and other professional staff, e.g. social workers or health care workers involved in your child's welfare.**

We are extremely proud of our Nottingham schools who have made such magnificent efforts to support our children and young people during this difficult time.

Nottingham City Council, the NHS, and the Government are grateful for the work of teachers and workers in educational settings for continuing to provide for the children of the other critical workers of our country. It is an essential part of our national effort to combat this disease.

Kind regards,



Catherine Underwood
Corporate Director for People

Guidance for Accessing A School Place

Critical Worker

If you are a parent who is classified as a critical worker (see list below) and you are unable to make sure your child can be safely cared for by a partner or member of your immediate household during the school day you should:

- First contact your child's school. If their school can't offer a place for your child they may arrange for you to attend another local school that has places available.
- If you are unable to secure a place through route this please contact Nottingham City Council on 0115 876 4700 between 09.00 – 16.00. Staff will help you to get a school place for your child.
- It is important that you are able to provide evidence of your employment status, such as an employer ID badge or a letter from your employer confirming that you are a critical worker.

Please only use any place offered during times when you actually require it. If your situation changes and you don't require a place on any day please let the school know immediately.

Vulnerable Children Including those with an EHCP

If your child is classified as vulnerable because they have social care involvement or and an EHCP covering their needs, your child's school should have discussed in detail with you the arrangements most suitable for their needs. It may be that it is agreed because of health concerns that they are safer staying at home with you. However, it may be agreed that they can safely attend school for the full school week or on a part time basis.

Please recognise that the demands of keeping your child at home over a long period of time may not be in the best interests of your child or family. The best plan for your child during this difficult time needs to be agreed by yourself, your child's school and people involved in their care such as social workers and health care staff.

Nottingham City Council staff will be checking that the arrangements have been made and that they are being reviewed regularly as long as schools remain closed due to the Covid-19 crisis.

If you are concerned about your current arrangements – either keeping your child at home or their continued attendance at school – please telephone **0115 876 4700 between 9.00 and 16.00** and support will be offered to you.

We want your child to remain safe and well and recognise that you may need additional support to manage this due to the challenges we are all facing.

Critical Worker Guidance

Health and social care

This includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

Education and childcare

This includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who must remain active during the COVID-19 response to deliver this approach.

Key public services

This includes those essential to the running of the justice system, religious staff, charities and workers delivering key frontline services, those responsible for the management of the deceased, and journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting.

Local and national government

This only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the COVID-19 response or delivering essential public services such as the payment of benefits, including in government agencies and arms-length bodies.

Food and other necessary goods

This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines).

Public safety and national security

This includes police and support staff, Ministry of Defence civilians, contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic), fire and rescue service employees (including support staff), National Crime Agency staff, those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas.

Transport

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

Utilities, communication and financial services

This includes staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure), the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage), information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the COVID-19 response, as well as key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services), postal services and delivery, payments providers and waste disposal sectors.