



19th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

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 along with the Wade Deacon Trust and our Local Governing Body, I would like to pay tribute to their remarkable commitment. They have been extraordinary and we will continue to play our part over the coming weeks.

As you may be aware, the Government made several very important decisions yesterday evening (18th March) about schools. There will be further details to follow but I wanted to ensure you had as much information as possible as early as possible.

The first is that the Government has advised schools in England to close, except for certain groups of children, from this Friday afternoon (20th March) onwards as a further measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19. No date has been set for when schools will re-open for all students.

From Monday, the school will continue to be open for all the following groups of students;

- Children whose parents are frontline workers – the Government has initially said these will include NHS staff, police, supermarket delivery drivers, teachers and social workers. However, others may be in this category and we expect to hear more from the government on this in the coming days.
- Those classed as what the Secretary of State described as vulnerable children. These would be those who have a social worker and those with EHCPs.

For students in these groups, we have also been asked to try to remain open through the Easter holidays and we will do our best to achieve this. From Monday 23rd March and throughout this period our school will provide care for these children. As soon as I have more information on the above groups, I will share it with you. **If you feel that you fit into the key worker category and you will need your child to attend school, can you please contact the school office or complete the school survey for key workers via the school Twitter feed @whistonwillis1 as soon as possible (by 12.30pm Friday so that we can ensure that we have adequate staffing levels.**

If your child is in one of the groups above, they should report to school via the KS1 Infant Hall door at 8.40am and be collected from the same place at 3.10pm

I hope you will recognise the difficult times schools and teachers now face. We are called on to provide emergency childcare at a time when many teachers' 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 resources.

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Therefore, children who do not fall into the groups listed above should remain at home with the appropriate care. There may also be partners who work from home or other non-elderly family members who could provide childcare support. I must stress schools are closed for public health reasons and the provision we are putting in place is an emergency measure only. Please support our staff and each other by respecting the need for key workers to have access to appropriate childcare at this time.

Over the last few weeks, we have been looking into different ways to do this and you have all received work packs for completion. Additional details of expectations will be updated on class twitter pages and the school website.

The second key Government announcement is that tests and exams will not take place this summer. For children and young people who have worked so hard to prepare for their SATs, GCSEs or A-levels this may be upsetting, and we are so upset for them. At the moment, we do not have the information regarding SATS but as soon as we do we will pass that onto you.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that our website www.whistonwillis.co.uk and Twitter @whistonwillis1 will be used as the official method of communication during the period of closure to ensure reliable and clear communication from the school.

Finally, 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.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Ian Cooper

Principal

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