

Dear Parents

20 March 2020

I wanted to provide you with an update on Lighthouse School's current situation.

A number of staff will be self-isolating for the proposed 12 weeks due to their own, or family members', health conditions. A number of staff are presently on a time limited isolation of 14 days as someone in the family has shown signs of the virus. Two staff members have reported they are demonstrating specific coronavirus symptoms.

There are also a number of families who are in the same situation, who have withdrawn their children from school due to their own, or family members', health conditions. There is also significant number of families who feel that it would be safer for their children to be at home.

For the last two days school has provided home learning for all Lighthouse School students and provided Wellbeing, safeguarding and family support. Thank you for the positive feedback and your response in working flexibly with us.

You will be aware that the government have said schools are to stay open for all children who are vulnerable, including those with EHCPs. Currently the staffing situation as described above, means that despite this directive from the government, school cannot physically open due to staffing. There is no definition of open at this stage and whether a virtual school is an acceptable alternative. A virtual school can be facilitated at present as staff who are having to stay home can work remotely.

The school has also been advised by the government that we are to stay open for the children of key workers.

The government released information late last night about who is a key worker. This information can be found [here](#). The list does cover a wide range of professions. There are some key principles the government has asked you to follow if you are a key worker which are below:

Taken from the government website

Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined below. Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. And every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.

Please, therefore, follow these key principles:

1. *If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.*



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2. *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.*
3. *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.*
4. *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.*
5. *Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.*

Please also look at [this](#) link if you want further information.

If you are a key worker and you do need to send your child to school so that you can carry out your role, we will need details of where you work, your hours, and evidence of your key worker status. School will endeavour to open for the parents of key workers and vulnerable children but this will depend on staff availability with the restrictions implemented to prevent the spread of the disease.

In order to enable us to plan effectively we require you complete [this](#) form by 3pm on Friday 20 March if you believe you are classed as a key worker and would want to use the school as childcare.

Our priority at this stage is to establish if we have enough available staff to cover the number of students that may come to school due to parent(s)/carer(s) being a keyworker. The sooner you can inform us, the better.

We are currently looking into catering options to provide those children who qualify for a free school meal a suitable alternative.

The school will be deep cleaned on Saturday 21 March 2020 to support the environment to be infection free. Following the advice of the Local Authority health and safety team for this to be effective we should not enter the building for 72 hours.

Therefore, school will remain physically closed on Monday 23rd March 2020. The school will continue to provide virtual home learning and wellbeing support for all students. Please can I remind you that parents/students are required to register remotely via an electronic form which is sent from attendance@lighthouseschool.co.uk.

Thank you for continued support during this difficult time.

Take care and stay safe.

Emma Sullivan

