

Our Lady's Girls' Primary School

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20 March 2020

REF: SUPPORTING CHILDREN OF KEY WORKERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

At approximately 5pm yesterday, the Minister for Education in Northern Ireland, Peter Weir MLA, made a statement outlining how schools will close from Friday 20th March, however, will open with skeleton staff on Monday 23rd March to support identified Key Workers.

Many Principals in North Belfast have agreed to follow a coordinated response to ensure that we support the children of key workers in a similar way across our schools. Some schools may be in a position to provide more support, depending on the numbers of staff still available to work.

Firstly, it is vitally important that schools are aware how many children of key workers will be attending school on Monday morning. With this in mind, if you are an identified key worker, please make contact with school by 1.00pm today Friday 20th March to inform us if your child will be attending. Please do this by phone.

Before contacting school, please pay particular attention to the following points. Schools will not be able to operate a 'normal' school day. Many of our schools are already operating with a significant reduction in staffing and this will probably continue to get worse over time.

POINTS TO CONSIDER

- A list of key workers, issued by the Department of Education is listed below
- In single parent families, the individual parent MUST be a key worker
- If possible, alternative childcare arrangements should be sought before deciding to send your child to school. For example, with other family members, friends etc. Please try and use schools as a last resort. This is to try and limit the number of children and adults together in a small space in line with recent social distancing guidance
- School will not have wraparound services available
- Normal opening and closing time will apply
- Children attending will be required to wear their school uniform
- Please be advised that schools will be performing childcare duties, rather than teaching, as not all teachers are currently available to teach specific year groups and teachers must also be available to provide online/remote learning for pupils not in attendance

We would ask that you pay attention to the points outlined above before deciding to send your child to school. Obviously, if your only option is to send your child to school, we will look after them in order to support you in your important role. However, depending on our staff attendance, we will be prioritising requests through a tiered approach. When you ring the school, you will be asked a series of questions in order to help us with our arrangements.

We wish all of our families well at this most difficult time.

Yours sincerely,

Emer Hughes

LIST OF KEY WORKERS AS OUTLINED ON DOCUMENTATION ISSUED TO SCHOOLS ON 19TH MARCH 2020

Please work with us to ensure that schools can operate with a limited number of children and staff

- **Health and Social Care** This includes doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, home carers and staff required to maintain our health and social care sector
- **Education and Childcare** This includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who will remain active during the Covid-19 response
- **Public Safety and National Security** This includes civilians and officers in the police (including key contractors), Fire and Rescue Service, prison service and other national security roles
- **Transport** This will include those keeping air, water, road and rail transport modes operating during the Covid-19 response
- **Utilities and Communication** This includes staff needed for oil, gas, electricity and water (including sewage) and primary industry supplies, to continue during the Covid-19 response, as well as key staff in telecommunications, post and delivery, services and waste disposal
- **Food and Other Necessary Goods** This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution and sale, as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (e.g hygiene, medical etc)
- **Key national and local government** including those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the Covid-19 response