



# Tannery Drift First School

ROYSTON • HERTFORDSHIRE

21<sup>st</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Keeping the school open for the number of children from families notifying us of keyworker status and the need for help with childcare is proving a challenge full of difficult decisions. We are writing to clarify with you the main points of the government guidance and ask for your help.

The government has requested that all schools provide optional care for a limited number of children these are: Children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response **and** cannot be safely cared for at home.

The key message about the closure plan is that **every child who can be safely cared for at home should be**. Closure of schools has been shown to have a beneficial effect on the spread and peak numbers of COVID-19 patients **but only if children are not left with grandparents or others in a vulnerable group**. This is why schools were not closed as an initial response and the offer of childcare in the school setting for those people that are considered key workers and have exhausted all other options to socially isolate their children and keep them at home.

As a school we are keen to be able to offer this support to as many families as possible for as long as possible, this will require some careful staffing structure: ensuring that staff work in isolated teams will sadly restrict the number of children that we can offer provision to however, closure of the school due to staff illness will impact our most vulnerable children and our most critical key workers with massive impact on society.

We really need our parents to consider the wider picture for our society and **only claim 'key worker' status if absolutely necessary**. As a key worker your health is critical to the national effort, **the best way to remain healthy is to find a way to keep your children at home and socially distance yourself**. We have a responsibility to ensure that the number of children and staff on site at any time is minimised so as to be able to practice social distancing within the school environment and if necessary to track groups and contacts in the case of an outbreak within the population.

We do appreciate that the government guidance asks that we consider applications for childcare from families in which at least-one parent or carer is a key worker but in light of the number of applications we have received we will have to judge each claim against a set of criteria to ensure we can meet our responsibilities to staff, vulnerable children, and key workers.

1. Vulnerable children: supported by social care, children in care (Looked after children), Young carers, Disabled children, Children with an EHCP.
2. Families in which both parents are key workers, or single parent families in which the main care giver is a key worker; **and** are able to evidence discussion with their employer about any changes in work pattern, place or duties to facilitate childcare at home.

3. Families in which both parents are key workers, or single parent families in which the main care giver is a key worker.
4. Families in which 1 parent is a key worker **and** clear reason is provided as to why the non-key worker parent is unable to contribute to child care with evidence from their employer.
5. Families in which 1 parent is a key worker.

We understand that families are worried about income and security of work and hope that the offerings of the Chancellor on Friday with regards to assisting employers to pay salaries will ease discussions for those people in category 4 and 5 above allowing you to notify us of the other arrangements you have made.

We will notify families directly later today if we can offer your child a place.

We appreciate the trust that you are putting in us to keep your children safe and offer stability in the face of this national crisis but do ask that if you have not had confirmation that we have a place for your child/children that you do not bring them to the school site on Monday.

Yours sincerely

*Anna Greetham*

Headteacher

**Headteacher: Mrs Anna Greetham**

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