

Thursday 19th March 2020

Dear Parents

Good evening. I write to update you with regard to our preparations to close down from tomorrow and continue to support children and families in new and unique ways.

Thank you to everyone for their kind words of support and encouragement. The staff team have worked tirelessly all day preparing for the challenges ahead and as always the children have shone with their kindness and consideration. I could not be prouder to lead such an amazing and dedicated team of professionals working with such fantastic children.

Final Day

Tomorrow will be the final day for our children for an unknown length of time. We have discussed with all children with special focus on Year Six how to mark this day in a special way while also taking into consideration the gravity of what is happening globally.

As always I am touched by the children's maturity and compassion. They really are a credit to themselves. It is with huge sadness we will close the gates tomorrow evening not knowing when they will be fully opened again to welcome everyone back.

Rest assured however that they will reopen and we will be counting down to that day. It will be with enormous pride and honour that we will open them again as soon as possible ready to welcome back our family. Every child that comes to our schools is forever in our family. They touch our hearts, live long in our memories and are always welcome back.

We might not see you everyday over the coming weeks and possibly months but our family connection remains just as strong. We will miss everyone incredibly. We hope and pray everyone stays safe and keeps healthy at this time. Look out for and after each other.

I will personally be in touch on a regular basis to update you throughout the closure period .

Providing work for children learning at home

As mentioned in my last communication we have created a dedicated page of our website with guidance and tips regarding home learning as well as information regarding procedures. Please visit <http://follifootandspofforth.co.uk/home-learning/> and read all this information carefully.

Children will come home tomorrow with various resources to support their learning during this school closure period. Please help them to look after these especially the reading books and maths resources that can then be returned when school reopens.

Please read carefully the arrangements for the setting of work. Please also remember these may have to adapt and change if staff become unwell. We can provide a certain level of cover for each other but we can not bring in extra staff as we would do if school was open. This may mean there are days when we can not always provide the daily update of ideas and suggestions.

Provision in schools for vulnerable children and the children of essential key workers

Frustratingly we still await clarification on the definition of 'essential key workers'. It looks very much like it will be tomorrow before we receive this. We urgently need the definition and also need to know if families need both or just one parent to be classed as essential key workers. Until we get this and can accurately assess how many children we would need to cater for we are unable to confirm any arrangements.

If you missed them in my previous communication here are our initial thoughts.

The current definition of vulnerable children in relation to provision during school closures is;

- Children with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- Children with an allocated social worker

Our early thinking is that we will be aiming to offer care based provision for vulnerable children and the children of essential key workers at Spofforth school during school hours (8.55 – 3.20) term time only. I acknowledge this is a basic core offer and we are currently exploring options of if it is feasible to offer an extended day also. However, given we have no idea how long this provision may need to last for it is crucial we look to establish a model that has the best chance of being sustained over an extended period of time taking in to account the likelihood that more staff will either need to self-isolate or be taken ill.

In this possible model children would be supervised by support staff with one teacher on site also. Children would have supervision and where possible support to complete the work sent to all other children.

Our model would assume vulnerable children and the children of key workers would only access this provision when they genuinely need it as one of aims of closing schools is to support social distancing.

As is always the case school will only remain open when it is safe to do so. There is every chance despite all best efforts staffing will get to a level where it is unsafe to keep this provision open and the decision would be taken to close school.

We would of course give those parents accessing this provision as much advanced notice of this as is possible.

The Local Authority have clarified in the event of Spofforth School no longer being able to provide care for vulnerable children and essential workers they would undertake this duty and make arrangements for children.

When we receive a final definition of essential key workers will be getting in touch with everyone who has contacted us so far regarding the possibility of accessing this provision. While respecting privacy and not wishing to pry, we may have to seek clarification around job roles in order to accurately assess if roles meet the agreed definition.

If you have not already done so please let us know if you are a key worker in an essential service such as the (NHS, Police or Fire Service) or have a child who is classed as vulnerable (as described above) please contact the school if **you are not able** to make childcare arrangements so that we can put in place provision for your child. Please contact us via admin@spofforth.n-yorks.sch.uk or admin@follifoot.n-yorks.sch.uk.

In your contact please state the nature and location of your work and if you are full or part time. If you are part time please let us know the days you work.

I will update everyone further as we receive more information.

Many thanks for your understanding as we continue to navigate these unprecedented times. Take care and stay safe. Very best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Mr Paul Griffiths Headteacher.

