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20th March 2020

COVID-19 -update from the WHF
All WHF school open next week for Key Worker families and Vulnerable Children

Dear Parent or Carer,

Can I start by thanking you for your support and understanding during what is a very disturbing and previously unknown situation. Your support is invaluable in helping us to keep your child safe and as well supported as possible during these difficult and confusing times.

Overnight the Government gave us some greater clarity about the role that schools will play in supporting its aspiration to slow down and thwart the progress of the C19 viral threat.

Our position is very clear based on this guidance

“All WHF schools will remain open to parents of vulnerable children and key workers. BUT we are being asked to increase social distancing and reduce social interaction so therefore parents should only send to school if you are one of the aforementioned and have exhausted every other childcare option in-line with government guidance”

The Government has given us 5 guiding principles by which we will be expected to operate. These are

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

The ones in red are their expectations of you and it's clear later in their guidance that the expectation is

“...schools to remain open only for those children who **absolutely need to attend....”**

But please be aware we will not shirk from doing everything in our power to meet the needs defined in point 2. This will be our priority. Your child, even if not in school will have regular contact from school staff and we will listen I promise.

So how do we intend to manage this?

1. Key workers will be identified by an online form which will be created by 1.00 p.m. today and placed on your school's web site.
2. In order to enable us to work out the numbers of staff required and those pupils attending we would ask you to get this form back to us by 5.00 p.m. tonight if possible.
3. **Key workers will self-elect** if they are part of this group in the first instance but please wherever possible consider points 1 and 4 above.
4. If your child is thought to be potentially vulnerable the SENCo or form/class teacher of each child will be in contact to suggest that they attend school as normal.
5. The full curriculum in school **will not be taught** and **it will not differ in quality or quantity** from that sent home with every child. What we are basically offering is childcare provision.
6. While in school food will be provided but it is likely to be a limited menu.
7. During this time, we would also ask you to regularly look at the "School Status page" on your school's website.

Finally, can I say that we are travelling on unchartered roads at the moment and things are likely to change. Guidance from the centre may alter our course, staff may increasingly be off, resources may be in decline who knows.

One thing is for certain that we will never stop trying to be flexible in our quest to support you and your child and we would ask that you also support us with a degree of understanding and flexibility going forward.

You and your child, their happiness and your faith in us are at the forefront of everything we do.

Take care, keep talking to us and all the best wishes,



Dr Nicholas Capstick OBE

CEO

The White Horse Federation