

March 2020



SIR JAMES SMITH'S
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Dear Parents/Carers

Special opening from Monday 23 March for the children of critical key workers and those entitled to specialist support

Firstly, thank you for the very supportive approach that you have taken during these exceptionally challenging times. Whilst our schools are formally closed from Monday 23 March onwards, we will continue to support your child. More detailed information will continue to be sent to you in support of this.

Please ensure that you read the following letter all the way through, there are some vital **'Actions for Parents'** further down to which we need a rapid response.

The advice from government

Parents are asked to read and follow these key principles:

- If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
- If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical key worker, then child care provision will be available for them.
- Parents should not rely upon grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions for childcare
- 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.

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical key worker sectors, and you cannot keep your child safe at home, then your children will be prioritised for education provision.

School closure – this applies to the majority of pupils

First of all a reminder that, for the vast majority of children, **all schools will be closed at the end of the school day today (Friday 20th March)** until further notice. It is likely school closure will remain in place for at least 12 weeks i.e. until June/July.

Separate emails will be sent out regarding learning at home and provision for the vast majority of pupils who will not be in school for the time-being.

Sir James Smith's School - Secondary aged childcare provision

NCLT schools will all close except Camelford Primary School and Sir James Smith's. The government have asked us to provide child care provision for pupils whose parents(s) are key workers. This will take place only at Camelford Primary School and Sir James Smith's.

- From Monday (March 23rd) there will be an offer of childcare from 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday based at Sir James Smith's School for children who need it on any given day (see below for a definition of 'need' and for children who are eligible). Please note this child care provision covers the Easter break as well.

Sir James Smith's Community School, Dark Lane, Camelford, Cornwall PL32 9UJ

Headteacher: Kristien Carrington

Tel: 01840 213274 enquiries@sirjamesmiths.cornwall.sch.uk

www.sirjamesmiths.cornwall.sch.uk

- This will not be a 'drop-in' facility. Children's attendance will only be by advance arrangement or, in emergencies, with an agreement from your child's Headteacher (see email addresses below).
- Pupils attending will be expected to bring a packed lunch. Food will only be provided in school for those pupils eligible for free school meals
- A guiding principle will always be in place that the safety of the children is paramount, if we are unable to provide safe care for any given child due to staff shortages or lack of expertise, we will not be able to cater for that child until we can make it safe to do so

Please note that this is not normal school provision – it is an emergency childcare initiative which will be safe and enjoyable for everyone involved but will not be the equivalent of normal school provision in terms of the educational content of each day.

Eligible Children: The government has now provided a comprehensive list of 'Key Workers' within the information to be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>.

Please note that the guidance refers to 'essential' workers for many of the groups. As an example, local NHS trusts have already identified groups of workers who can work from home, so simply working for the NHS does not qualify a family for these arrangements.

The guidance also clarifies 'vulnerable children' as those, "with safeguarding and welfare needs, including child in need plans, on child protection plans, 'looked after' children, disabled children and those with [education, health and care \(EHC\) plans](#)."

If you believe that your child is not covered by the 'vulnerable' category above, but that they will need extra support beyond what you can provide at home, please contact your child's Headteacher as soon as possible. We will also be contacting families where the school's judgement is that they should be offered some provision but do not currently qualify.

In order to best protect both children and staff during this crisis, we will be asking that childcare is requested only where there is a 'need'. Although having one 'critical worker' in the household may qualify your child for this provision, we would expect that if there is a non-critical worker in the home capable of basic childcare during the day that guiding principle 1 should be the starting point for families. The guidance reaffirms this stance with the following statement:

"Many parents working in these critical sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. **Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.**"

We would ask that all families consider the impact on themselves, their families and others in terms of the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) before requesting childcare.

Action for Parents:

- If you haven't already, please inform your school if you believe that you qualify for the childcare arrangements AND whether you think that you may need to use them.
- **Whether you have already been in touch or not, please contact us by 5pm today (Friday 20th March) to let us know if you will require childcare on either Monday or Tuesday of next week (23rd and 24th March) between the hours of 8am – 5pm so that we can plan staff arrangements accordingly.** Once we have everything in place for Monday, we will start gathering information for Wednesday onwards

Free School Meals: There will be a number of children who are entitled to a free school meal who are not eligible for the childcare arrangements. There is work underway to provide vouchers for children whilst they are off school.

Concluding Points

As noted above, shortly we will be in touch regarding a range of other important pieces of information. If you have any immediate concerns, please contact your child's headteacher via email head@sirjamesmiths.cornwall.sch.uk.

As I continue to make clear, our schools will be closed to the majority of pupils but we are in no way closed in terms of our ongoing care, support and kindness.

Yours faithfully



Jon Lawrence
Trust Leader