



Northern Saints
Catholic Education Trust

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Ayr Drive, Jarrow NE32 4AW Tel. 0191 4898336: Fax. 0191 4898338

Acting Executive Head Teacher: Mrs. M. Graham

Acting Head of School: Mrs. A. Tumelty

soffice@stmarysjarrow.co.uk www.stmarysjarrow.co.uk

20 March 2020

Dear Families,

In response to the new Government guidelines which were released this morning, I can now offer the following advice, and hopefully some further clarity. All schools are closed from the end of the school day today. The Government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to provide for those who absolutely need it. The service that the school is providing is an emergency one and should not be abused.

In order to reduce the spread of the virus, we would wish for a limited number of children in school at one time, plus staff. Childcare at this time will be allocated on a priority basis (both parents who are key workers will be given priority). Please understand that difficult decisions will need to be made.

Remember, your child will be safer at home and using the childcare offer should only be if there is no safe alternative for your child. Requesting a child care place should be the last resort.

Both or lone parents need to be critical workers as listed below:

1. Vulnerable children (on an EHCP plan or Health Care Plan – and if they CANNOT safely be looked after at home).
2. Health and social care (doctors, nurses, paramedics, social workers, care workers and other frontline health and social care staff)
3. Public safety - police, fire, ambulance, probation, prison employee.
4. Education and childcare teachers, teaching assistants (for those who are still at work)
5. Key to public services - management of deceased, journalists, religious staff or running of the justice system, charity and workers delivering key front line services.
6. Local and national Government - only frontline services.
7. Transport - those who keep the air, water, road and rail passengers operating during COVID19 response.
8. Food and necessary goods - food production, sales or delivery.
9. Utilities and financial - if essential for COVID19 response e.g. banks, building societies, oil, gas and electric services.

It is clear from Government advice that *'if children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading'*. We ask that you please follow this advice and request a childcare place only if absolutely necessary – please allow us to prioritise those who are working tirelessly to stop the spread of this virus, administering essential medical care and keeping our country safely running. At this time of national crisis, please do not ask for your child to attend school because it is easier for you.

If you are able to safely sort childcare, or you are working from home, please try to utilise all other means before sending children to school.



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Most teachers will be working from home, as with much of the population, while they care for their own families. I am currently in the process of organising a rota of staffing within school; we will operate with a minimum staff for as long as I can safely do so to enable us to care for the children who need to attend. Your children will therefore not have the same teacher each day.

During this period of school closures, we will not be operating normal lessons. If we do have children in school we will be doing similar home learning activities as those that we have set for all other children. No other teaching will be taking place, so as not to disadvantage the vast majority of children who have been told they must stay at home.

If it is essential that you do need a childcare place and fit the criteria, please email the school (soffice@stmarysjarrow.co.uk) clearly stating your role and the days you need childcare. If you do not need every day, please make that clear. We do need evidence from your employer that you are a critical worker. If your child attends our wrap around service and you need this, then please inform us on the email and let us know the days that you need. Initially, we need to know if you expect your child to be in school on Monday. When you arrive in school, it is expected that you will complete a key worker survey with staff.

The kitchen service is planning on providing school lunches for children when they are in for childcare. Universal free school meal children will receive these free of charge as normal, as well as children eligible for free school meals. All other children will pay as normal through parent pay. Children can bring packed lunch if they wish.

The children that do attend will be expected to wear their PE kit or a sports kit whilst in school. We are hoping to be as flexible as possible with timings to minimise the number of children in school at one time. This can be discussed further once we have identified the children.

We will be continuing to review and monitor the situation closely.

This was not the letter we ever wanted to send out to our families. We will miss you all so much over the next period and we wish the very best for every one of you.

Thank you in advance for your understanding. Your support has been very much appreciated during these challenging times.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. A Tumelty
Acting Head of School



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