

Tuesday 17th March 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

Re: Covid-19

I wanted to write to you all to share what a challenging time we appreciate this is for all our families. We know personally how difficult it is to have children in this most difficult of circumstances where information and advice is changing daily. We fully understand that this is made all the more difficult by having a child with additional needs and / or disability.

You are aware of the lengths that the school has gone to in order to remain open as we know what a difficult decision to close would be for you and the impact that this may have day-to-day and for your families, however the school's context means that we are unable to avoid hand to hand contact with our pupils which increases the risk of infection. The Local Authority and DfE are aware of our concerns and the critical need to protect this vulnerable pupil population alongside the health of our staff teams. We are fully enacting all advice we have received!

Currently we have no plans to close however should we have insufficient staffing (due to staff needing to self-isolate) or be directed to by Central Government to promote prevention measures then we will.

If the school was closed:

- You would be informed by text, email and msgs on class dojo.
- The class teacher would contact you daily to provide a recommendation of learning schedules and activities.
- Learning would include videos that will be located on class You Tube channels (details to follow), class dojo and resources that will be provided either through home visits, in packs or in toy swap events.
- Staff will risk assess and carry out home visits where appropriate and recommended to do so.
- There would be daily updates on the status of the school.

We do appreciate that some of you may have made the difficult decision to keep your children at home or are having to self isolate. Please be assured that whatever the circumstances of your child's absence due to Coronavirus we will be authorising this absence for exceptional circumstances. We understand the unique challenges that some of you are facing. Where parents have informed us that children will now be at home longer term work packs will be delivered to your address tomorrow.

Please take good care of yourselves and each other in this difficult and challenging time and remember that The Orchard's Staff Team will be here for whatever you need over the coming weeks and months.

With my very best wishes,

Helen O'Brien

