



Confidential – Parent Copy

Balfour Junior Academy



Proud to be a part of the Fort Pitt Thomas Aveling Academy Trust

Thursday, 19th March 2020

Dear Parents and Friends,

I wanted to send this letter as soon as possible following the announcement that all schools in the UK will be closed from Monday to share my initial thoughts. More will follow once we receive further official information from the Department for Education. We have only seen the same news reports as you and we have just had some very brief information from the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson. We are still working it all out, but we know you will be worried so wanted to touch base.

Education from Monday 23rd March

As you will have also seen, schools have been asked to play a different and vital role in the national effort in tackling the coronavirus. The school does not underestimate the magnitude of this request and will attempt to rise to it.

From Monday, schools are being asked to open to provide care for vulnerable pupils and those whose parents are carers or key workers. **This may not be at the Balfour site.** The Secretary of State is clear: this is an entirely different role for schools and school staff. It is primarily about care, not education.

You are only allowed to send in your child from Monday if you fall in to one of three categories:

- You fall in to one of the key worker categories (yet to be defined)
- Your child has an EHCP and you want your child to come to school
- Your child has social worker involved with the family.

Please contact me directly as a matter of urgency if you fall into one of these categories. **At the very latest by 4.00 today.** We will provide details regarding the placement as soon as it is available.

Even if you are/your child falls into these groups - you may still choose to not send him/her in as you are happy to leave them at home with another adult.

Definitions of the occupations referred to above and of vulnerable students will be supplied as soon as we have them from the Government.

We will be asking for staff to volunteer their availability both short and longer term - taking into account their own health, family health and childcare issues to help with this effort. We have had many volunteers already.

We will also be working with our canteen and with the Local Authority to look for a solution to provide food or food vouchers for those who are eligible for free school meals.

Please can you check that your child knows how to access their school email account as this will be needed. If they don't, they should see staff tomorrow who will show them.

For the remainder of this week

We will be open today and Friday as usual. I am available in school until 1.30 on Friday and by e.mail thereafter.

I will write again once we have heard further from the DfE and also from other schools and Trusts across Medway

Please rest assured, we will do everything we can to support you and your child through these uncertain times.

Please stay safe and well.

With very best wishes

Kim Parnell