

Education and Skills • People • Cumbria House • 110 - 117 Botchergate  
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Dear Parents/Carers

### **Urgent Guidance: Priority childcare arrangements in schools for children of essential workforce from Monday 23 March**

As a country, we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. That is why the government has given clear guidance on self-isolation, household isolation and social distancing. And the most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.

That is why the government has asked parents to **keep their children at home, wherever possible.**

#### **Arrangements in Cumbria**

In Cumbria **some** schools will reopen to support key workers with essential child care, **only for those children who absolutely need to attend.** This will be children who are vulnerable or whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

Because some schools are already closed due to large numbers of staff self-isolating, or displaying symptoms, this means that your child's normal school **may** not be available.

**Your child's school will be in touch with you to inform you about this as soon as possible and to confirm whether or not they will be open next week, and if not, to inform you which local school your child should attend.**

**There will be no school transport provision.** Parents will be required to take their own children to school if it is essential that they attend.

Children should attend school in their uniform as usual.

If you are sending your child to school on Monday, please **arrive no earlier than 9.30am** in order to give schools time to finalise preparations ahead of opening

#### **Who can send their children to school?**

Parents whose work is **critical** to the COVID-19 response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined below. Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. **And every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.**

If your work is **critical** to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors listed below, and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children can attend school from on Monday.

If parents think they fall within the critical categories below they should **confirm with their employer their specific role is necessary** for the continuation of this essential public service.

**If people do not act responsibly and only send children if necessary, schools that are open may be overwhelmed. Please be responsible and only make use of this provision if absolutely necessary.**

#### Health and social care

This includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

#### Education and childcare

This includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who must remain active during the COVID-19 response to deliver this approach.

#### Key public services

This includes those essential to the running of the justice system, religious staff, charities and workers delivering key frontline services, those responsible for the management of the deceased, and journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting.

#### Local and national government

This only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the COVID-19 response or delivering essential public services such as the payment of benefits, including in government agencies and arms length bodies.

#### Food and other necessary goods

This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines).

#### Public safety and national security

This includes police and support staff, Ministry of Defence civilians, contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic), fire and rescue service employees (including support staff), National Crime Agency staff, those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas.

#### Transport

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

#### Utilities, communication and financial services

This includes staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure), the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage), information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the COVID-19 response, as well as key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services), postal services and delivery, payments providers and waste disposal sectors.

Yours sincerely



**Dan Barton**

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