



19th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I'm sure you have already seen yesterday's announcement from the government. I am sure, like most of us, you feel worried and confused about what this means and who will and won't be in schools.

Further to the announcement, schools, as providers of education, will be closed 'for the foreseeable future'. This means that school will close at 3:15pm on Friday for most and 6pm for those booked into our Dowson's Den provision. As I said yesterday, provision is being made for your children to be able to work from home and more details of this will come tomorrow. We will also ensure that we keep in regular contact with you and that we are available to you via all of our communication channels should you need us.

Schools have been asked to play a different and vital role in the national effort in tackling the coronavirus from therein. From Monday, we are being asked to open to provide care for vulnerable pupils and those whose parents or carers are 'key workers'. The secretary of state is clear: this is an entirely different role for schools and school staff. It is primarily about care, not education, though we will endeavour to continue a similar form of education for these pupils as those who will be continuing at home.

It has not yet been clarified who 'key workers' are, and as such, we are assuming that as a minimum this will include the emergency services, NHS staff, teachers, social workers and delivery drivers. 'Vulnerable children' include those who have a social worker and those with Education, Health Care Plans (EHCPs). Children who do not fall into these categories should remain at home with appropriate care. A full list will be available from the Cabinet Office later today and at that point, I will need to begin to put into action the plans we are beginning to make for this provision.

If you think, once the list is published, you will be eligible for this care, please email admin@dowson.tameside.sch.uk with details of why you think your child is eligible for this care. We will then contact you with further information when we know how it will work.

Thank you all for your continued support at this difficult time. Your patience and support is very much welcomed by the staff and I know we will continue to work together as we always do, to steer our Dowson family ship through the storm, keeping our children at the heart of all we do.

Please keep safe. Follow the social distancing guidance and advice that is being put into place and, most importantly take care of yourself and your families and friends. We hope that things can return to normal as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Mrs Kathryn Thornburn
Principal

