

20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Families,

Following our letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> March, we are writing to let you know the school's current position on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

First and foremost, your children are precious and their wellbeing is always at the centre of our decision-making. We also place great emphasis on our relationships with families and always aim to provide your special children with the education, care and support that you want, and they deserve.

As we all know, the past few weeks have been filled with uncertainty and unprecedented changes on a national and global scale. From an educational and medical perspective, we have been carefully following all policy announcements and guidance from a range of reliable sources to shape our decision-making. In addition to Wednesday night's announcements about schools, we have continued to refer to NHS guidance around social distancing for the most vulnerable. For more information about this, please see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people>

We take the health and safety of our pupils and the whole school community extremely seriously, especially given the vulnerable nature of so many of our pupils. For them to be safe in school, not only do we recognise that social distancing is a significant challenge, but sufficient staffing levels are paramount. When these are also compromised by significant outbreaks, such as we are facing at the moment, we have to consider whether we feel we can ensure our children are safe. With this in mind, and in consultation with our Governing Board and Local Authority colleagues, we have taken the decision to close the school from Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 until the end of the Spring Term (Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020). Please be assured that this decision has not been taken lightly – we have looked at a wide range of factors, carried out risk assessments and considered the whole school community and feel that this is the safest course of action to take at the present time.

We are uncertain at this stage what the next month will bring but we are already thinking ahead to what our school offer could look like after Easter. The first day back after Easter would ordinarily have been Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020 but I am afraid that we are unable to confirm for definite whether the school will operate in the usual way at that point. As we know, things are

changing on a daily basis but please be assured that we are looking creatively to plan ahead in the best interests of the whole school community. We hope to be in a position to share further details with you by Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and really appreciate your patience and understanding.

As outlined in our previous letter, we have been adding content and resources to our website for you to share with your child at home. Please visit [www.riversideschool.org.uk](http://www.riversideschool.org.uk) and access the **Information for Families > Coronavirus Home Resources** area for a wide range of songs, videos, games, activities and visual supports that we hope you will find useful. In addition, if you would like any advice on any home learning related topics or resources during term time (between 9am and 4pm, Monday to Friday), please contact your child's class teacher. Their details can be found at:

<https://www.riversideschool.org.uk/page/?title=Home+Learning+Contacts&pid=247> along with other useful contacts such as social care and charity organisations. Alternatively, please call the school on 01689 870519 and we will get back to you as soon as we are able to.

If you are a keyworker as defined in the latest guidance, please get in touch with the school on 01689 870519 as soon as you are able to discuss how we can support you at this time. We will consider each case on an individual basis and arrangements will be reviewed on a daily basis.

If your child is entitled to free school meals, our catering colleagues will be putting together food packs containing ingredients for five meals. These can be collected from **Riverside SPC** on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March between 10am-12pm and Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March between 10am-12pm.

Finally, we want to say that your children are wonderful and we care very much about them, your families and yourselves. We are sorry for any inconvenience caused and we hope that you understand our position in these challenging times. We will be in touch again during the Easter holidays and in the meantime, please look after yourselves and we will be thinking of you in the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely,



Steve Solomons  
Headteacher



George Christian  
Chair of Governors