

20 March 2020

Schools

- The Bicester School
 - Bicester Technology Studio
 - Theale Green School
 - UTC Heathrow
 - UTC Oxfordshire
 - UTC Reading
 - UTC Swindon
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Dear Parents/Carers

As communicated with you yesterday, our schools will close to almost all children at the end of today until further notice.

Today's update will concentrate upon the provision for children of key workers and vulnerable children at each of our schools from Monday 23 March. We will update further today once we have more information regarding the governments expected announcements concerning grading of examination courses (we do not yet know when we will receive this information).

Today the government released guidance regarding the definitions of vulnerable children and the categories of key workers. It is important to note that 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, and asked schools to remain open, only for those children who absolutely need to attend.

It is important to underline that schools remain safe places for children. But the fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in school, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society.

The government has today defined vulnerable children to include those who are supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs, including child in need plans, child protection plans, 'looked after' children, young carers, disabled children and those with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response have been outlined by the government. These include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors, outlined [here](#). 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.

It is vital that our schools are able to safely operate and therefore we ask that you contact the school today to let them know if you would like your child to attend the school from Monday 23 March. Please note the following regarding the provision:

- We will operate from 9.00am to 3.00pm each day
- Children will be supervised whilst completing the same work as set for children working at home
- Children do not need to wear school uniform

- A limited lunch provision will be available to purchase in the usual way and children entitled to free school meals will still receive these, albeit from a limited menu
- School buses will not run and therefore parents will be required to make arrangements for children to travel safely to and from school

At this time, the most important concern for all of us is the health of every member of our communities; this is new territory for all of us and we appreciate your continued support and words of encouragement.

Best wishes



Joanne Harper
Chief Executive Officer - ALET

