



24th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: Update from Aurora following the Prime Minister's Statements last night

I promised to keep in regular contact with you about the ongoing *Coronavirus Covid-19* situation and about Aurora's response to the current national emergency.

Thank you for the calm and supportive manner in which you have accepted the enforced school closures, the enormous upheaval to 'normal' school operations and the impact upon all of our lives. Your patience and respect are truly appreciated by our staff, who are under an immense amount of pressure, not only because they are trying to help minimise the spread of the virus, but also because they are simultaneously supporting the country's efforts to keep Keyworkers in their jobs as well as to care for the most vulnerable children in our communities.

On Monday we had less children in our schools than we had anticipated and we thank those families who have made other arrangements for the care of their children. Having less children in school means that we need less staff to care for them on the school premises and this means that there is a lower risk of the virus spreading. Therefore, may I reiterate the Government's advice: **please do not send your child to school** unless you are either a Keyworker who genuinely cannot make any other arrangements for your child's care, or in the very small number of cases where a vulnerable child cannot be cared for at home.

We will continue to monitor things at each school and you will receive regular updates from Headteachers advising you of the local arrangements for the care provision on offer. Please may I ask that parents do not physically enter the school buildings – we need to limit any contact with the staff on duty so that they have a better chance of remaining healthy. Should you need to contact school, for whatever reason, then please send an email and somebody will get back to you, just as soon as is humanly possible given the current circumstances. If your child is receiving childcare in school and there is an emergency situation, then schools will obviously contact you immediately.

In addition to this in-school provision, our schools have also been providing lunches for all pupils who are currently attending school, as well as making arrangements for those pupils who are not at school but who are entitled to Free School Meals. Please note that this offer does not extend to all pupils in YR, Y1 and Y2 who would normally receive a free meal under the Universal Infant School Meal programme. The Government has made it quite clear that schools are only to offer a meal (or a voucher) to children who have been registered for Free School Meals with the Local Authority. Each school has a confidential list of these pupils. There are local arrangements at each school for this

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food provision, so please look out for communications which will be sent directly to parents from each school over the next few days.

These are very challenging times for all of us and I am acutely aware that life is going to be very difficult for most people, probably, as a minimum, for the next few months. Please rest assured that Aurora Academies Trust and all of our schools will do our absolute best to support you and your child. However, in order to do so, we also need your support.

Therefore please obey the instructions and messages given by Prime Minister Boris Johnson in his statements last night. Stay at home and follow all the advice that has been given to us over the past few weeks. This is vital if we are to stop this virus from spreading; which in turn will save lives.

Please take care of yourselves and your loved ones.

I shall update you again should there be any further changes or restrictions imposed upon us, or if there is anything else that I need to share with you.

With my very best wishes to you all

Tim McCarthy
CEO, Aurora Academies Trust

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