

Dear parents and carers,

On the 19th March 2020, we received government advice on the response to coronavirus (COVID-19) for education settings.

- Guidance for schools, childcare providers, colleges and local authorities in England on maintaining provision (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>)
- Closure of educational settings: information for parents and carers (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>)

The guidance states that as a country we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The most recent scientific advice is clear. If children can stay safely at home, they should, as this will limit the virus spreading. For this reason, the government is asking parents to keep their children at home wherever possible and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.

We understand the pressure that this will put on families. The health and wellbeing of children is our priority. We are working urgently with all schools to put as much support in place for pupils and parents as we can.

For children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), there is no requirement for them to attend school if they can be safely cared for at home. Bradford special schools will follow government guidance on which children should attend school. This will be based on a locally agreed assessment criteria which takes into account vulnerable children, children with additional needs such as underlying health conditions and children of key workers as identified by the government. Those children who are not able to attend will receive learning support from the school through online learning or homework.

We will keep the situation under constant review and will update the website as soon as we know if the situation on the school closure changes. Below is the latest health advice on coronavirus (COVID 19), some frequently asked questions and some contact information that we hope is useful.

Latest health advice

- For the latest advice and information on COVID-19, people are advised to visit www.nhs.uk/coronavirus
- When schools close from Friday, do not let your children visit elderly people (age 70 or over), those who have a long-term health condition, those who are pregnant, or people who have a weakened immune system.
- If any of your family develop symptoms of a high temperature and a new, continuous cough, follow the advice on the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/coronavirus. DO NOT visit your GP, pharmacy or hospital. If symptoms persist or get worse use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service - 111.nhs.uk/covid-19/ - **you should only call NHS 111 if you cannot get help online.**

Frequently asked questions

Why is my special school closed to some pupils?

The recent scientific advice is clear. If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the virus spreading. There are also a number of children attending special schools with underlying health conditions that Public Health England has identified as being at greater risk from the COVID-19 virus. In these cases, parents should follow Public Health England advice and practise social distancing. This guidance can be found here;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

When will I know what is happening in my child's special school?

From Monday 23rd March 2020 your child's special school will contact you directly to inform you of the arrangements.

When will school be fully open again?

The government has not given a date for this. The situation will be kept under review and we will update our website and social media pages as soon as we get further information.

What if my child is able to attend their special school but requires support for longer than the school day because I am a key worker?

Please contact your child's special school to discuss support and care outside normal school hours. Any extended opening offered will be dependent on ensuring the school's duty of care responsibilities can be met. This will be based on securing appropriate staffing levels and will be subject to ongoing review.

Will my child's Education, Health and Care Plan be reviewed during the partial school closure?

All schools are provided with advice on how to undertake annual reviews if they are required. This includes how annual reviews can be made without a face-to-face meeting, e.g. telephone, email.

How will I know if my child can still attend school?

Your special school will have a conversation with you about whether your child can still attend. If you haven't heard anything, you should contact them.

I think I am a key worker, what do I do?

You need to check the list of critical workers from government. The list can be found at;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

If you are in doubt, contact the special school or Bradford Council.

What if I can't care for my child?

If you are unable to care for your child, you would need to seek the help and support of your family and extended networks. Should you require advice on how to do this safely please contact Bradford Council's Children Services.

Should your child have an allocated social worker please contact the allocated social worker directly or the duty social worker for the area team.

What should I do if my child gets free school meals?

Schools are currently organising how the meals service can support families through this period. When details have been confirmed, we will make this information available.

What if my child doesn't get free school meals but I am having difficulty feeding them?

Contact your special school and let them know so they can arrange for your child and/or you to have a meal.

Will teachers and staff still be contactable if I need to speak to them?

Individual teachers may not be contactable, however, all special schools will be contactable via the usual phone number.

What about children with exams?

This summer's exams have been cancelled. As soon as a national announcement is made on what the government and Ofqual (the people responsible for exams) plan to do, we will let you know.

Will my child continue to have all their special educational needs met?

During this exceptional period of partial closure, special schools will try to ensure that children's special educational needs are met.

Will my child continue to receive the treatment they need at school?

Special schools will continue to work with NHS providers to ensure that children's health needs continue to be met.

If my child is not able to attend school, will they be able to have their health needs met?

Special schools will be providing details on children with complex health needs who are not attending school to their local NHS provider.

Other useful contact numbers

- Job Centre Plus Benefits Enquiry line: 0345 604 3719
- You can find local help on the [Money Advice Service website](#).
- Citizens Advice Bureau: 0844 111 444. To find your local advice centre go to <http://www.divabradford.org.uk>
- Housing advice: [The Housing Options Service](#) - housing advice: 01274 435999
- [Samaritans](#): 24-hour helpline for the depressed, distressed and suicidal: 08457 909090
- If you need support for your mental health, advice and support is available online at [My Wellbeing College](#).
- Meal provision for the vulnerable or those in isolation in the Bradford district can be found at [Wellsprings Together](#).
- [Bevan House](#): advice and support centre for the homeless and asylum seekers: 01274 322400
- [National domestic violence helpline](#): 0800 200 0247
- Lone parent support: 0808 802 0925
- [NHS 111](#): telephone 111
- [NSPCC](#): 01274 769800
- PALS: NHS patient advice and liaison service: 01274 364021 for Bradford Royal Infirmary or 01274 365853 for Airedale General Hospital
- [Relate](#): relationship and individual counselling: 01274 726096
- [Bradford Council's children's services](#): 01274 435600
- [NHS search service](#): for help with finding a GP, dentist or hospital phone 111

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