LINK ACADEMY TRUST

Landscove School House
Landscove, Nr Ashburton
Devon. TQ13 7LY
Tel: 01803 762113

20.3.20

Dear parents and carers

Re: School Closure due to Coronavirus

I open this letter by reinforcing the government's key message that children, parents and carers must continue to follow the advice with regards to self-isolation for those who have symptoms of infection, or where there are underlying health conditions. This overrides any information outlined below.

The government announced on Wednesday 18th March that all schools would close at the end of the school day on Friday 20th March until further notice. All schools in the Link Academy Trust are following this instruction.

However, the government has also determined that some schools, where possible, would reopen on Monday 23rd March to provide 'Edu-care' for the children of 'key workers and (those who are) vulnerable'. 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.

The Key Worker information was published late last night and can be viewed on:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision

In summary the key worker list constitutes:

- Children who have a final EHCP (Education and Health Care Plan) - Children who have a Social Worker including those on Child Protection or with a Child in Need Plan.
- Children who have a parent who is a key worker, and who has no other parent or suitable adult to care for them at home

Health and social care
This includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributers of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

Education and childcare
This includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who must remain active during the COVID-19 response to deliver this approach.

Key public services
This includes those essential to the running of the justice system, religious staff, charities and workers delivering key frontline services, those responsible for the management of the deceased, and journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting.

Local and national government
This only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the COVID-19 response or delivering essential public services such as the payment of benefits, including in government agencies and arms length bodies.

Food and other necessary goods
This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines).

Public safety and national security
This includes police and support staff, Ministry of Defence civilians, contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic), fire and rescue service employees (including support staff), National Crime Agency staff, those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas.

Transport
This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

Utilities, communication and financial services
This includes staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure), the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage), information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the COVID-19 response, as well as key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services), postal services and delivery, payments providers and waste disposal sectors.

Please note that these parents should bring their children to school only when they need to – i.e. because they are at work and have no other suitable adult available to care for them. We may ask for proof of occupation.

It is The Link Academy's intention to adopt a clear strategy from the outset to try and ensure this can continue throughout the period of school closure. This more strategic approach will be achieved by adopting a hub model for provision but within reach of local communities. The aim will be to continue 'Edu-care' provision for eligible children but with the expectation that we are likely to experience a significant shortfall in staffing due to illness or self-isolation.

We have therefore established that as of Monday the following schools will operate for vulnerable children and the children of Key Workers when they are at work. Parents may chose whichever school is most accessible to them.

These schools are:

- **Bearnes in Newton Abbot,**
- **Cheriton Bishop for the Woodleigh Hub,**
- **Harbertonford and Landscove for schools in the Totnes area,**
- **Moretonhampstead for the Moorland primaries and**
- **Otterton for Raleigh Schools**.

These schools will be open from 8 am until 4 pm during normal term time.

At all times the aim is to keep children safe, healthy and prevent the spread of the virus, so we know it is essential that the schools we use are thoroughly cleaned each day.

It is highly likely that children, whilst in 'Edu-care', will be organised in mixed age groups and will be cared for by a combination of teachers, TAs and other school staff. The day will be structured differently in each school depending on the staff and physical resource available. Children will not be following the national curriculum but will be engaged in a variety of child care activities which could include e-learning.

I fully appreciate that this is a worrying and challenging time for everyone. I am sure you will appreciate schools having to respond to change on a daily basis at the moment, relying on the same information, at the same time as it is being given to the general public. We do appreciate your patience and will pass on what we know as soon as we are able to do so.

We will continue to remain in close contact throughout the period of closure, however long that may be, and will always be here to help and support you and your children. I wish you and your families well, and as the Prime Minister says, we will come through this together.

Kind regards,

Link Academy Trust – Registered Office Address
Landscove School, Landscove, Ashburton, Newton Abbot, Devon.TQ13 7LY
Tel:- 01803 762113 Email:- admin@thelink.academy

Please, follow these key principles:

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.
3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
4. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.
5. Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.

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