

Children and Families  
PO Box 837  
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23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

### **MESSAGE TO PARENTS FROM LEEDS CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DIRECTORATE**

We understand that these are uncertain times for everyone, and whilst the schools are closed it can seem harder to find information about what this means for you. School websites will be updated, letting you know about your own child's school, and we will be posting up to date information on the Council website too.

We have received lots of enquiries about what it means to be a key worker and whether your child should be attending school from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

**Our advice to parents is clear: Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.**

It is really important that we all work together to stop the Covid-19 virus from spreading, and children staying at home helps to do this. For the majority of children this is the safest place to be.

Schools will not be able to look after large numbers of pupils safely, as their own staff will also have to follow the rules about self-isolating.

The final decision as to whether a child can be safely accommodated at the school rests with the Headteacher/Principal based on their risk assessment of the situation. The Local Authority are supporting Headteachers/Principals in applying the following principles:

- Schools remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.
- The majority of children will be made safer by adhering to the principle above.
- School is open to pupils of key workers only where they would not be safe at home and the parents have no other option but for their child to be at school if they are to continue to do their jobs.

If your child has an Education Health Care Plan or a social worker, the decision as to whether they should attend school will be made in consultation with the Headteacher, parents and social workers. If your child can be looked after at home safely, then they should be. Staffing levels may not be high enough for all children to attend.

Headteachers and education staff are playing a crucial part in the national Covid-19 strategy. We would like to thank them for doing all they can to keep our city functioning at this difficult time and in supporting parents to play their vital role in the effort.

Yours faithfully,

**Saleem Tariq**  
Director of Children and Families