



Iain Peel
Service Director Schools and Learning
County Hall
Matlock
Derbyshire
DE4 3AG

To: Headteachers, Principals, Chairs of Governing Boards, FE Colleges and Multi-Academy Chief Executives

Telephone 01629 532750
Ask for Iain Peel/Alison Noble
Email iain.peel@derbyshire.gov.uk
Alison.noble@derbyshire.gov.uk
Our ref IP/VB
Your ref
Date 30 March 2020

Dear colleague

Covid-19 – DfE Updates

Thank you for your continuing support and everything that you continue to do for the county's young people. Like you, we stay abreast of regular developments and we are also in daily contact with the Department for Education (DfE).

The Government provided some refreshed guidance for schools staying open, Easter schools and also for school safeguarding on the evening of Friday 27 March 2020. You may have already seen this and some of the most salient points and links to the documents are below.

The guidance for schools regarding temporarily closing has been updated and key changes are around:

- How are vulnerable children defined?
- Is it compulsory for parents of vulnerable children to accept their place offer?
- Will critical workers or parents of vulnerable children be penalised if they do not send their child to school?
- What should schools do if vulnerable children do not attend school and what Public Health advice should schools follow?

The link to this document is below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing>

The guidance for schools on vulnerable children and young people has also been updated and key areas to note include:

- Section 13 - There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have health conditions that put them at severe risk. If your school is closed and you have children with a named social worker who normally attend your school, then please liaise with other schools in your area to see if they are open and can attend their school, and also liaise directly with the child's social worker in order that you can discuss the reasons. You should also discuss the reasons with the child's parents.
- Sections 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27 and 30 have also been updated with regards to special educational needs and alternative provision.

The link to this document is below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

The Government has also published safeguarding guidance to schools and colleges which covers key issue including:

- Whether all schools would need to have a DSL (or deputy) on site and what to do if this is impossible.
- Recommending that schools and colleges refresh their child protection policy during this period.
- Children and young people moving between schools and colleges and information which should be made available.
- Safer recruitment, movement of staff and use of volunteers.

The link to this document is below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

We have been asking for clarification from the DfE regarding **Easter schools**. The Government is clear about this within the document regarding temporarily closing schools. It is asking that schools, wherever possible, should remain open during the Easter break for children and young people of key workers. In Derbyshire, we would also extend this to asking you to also include young people where it is safer for them to be in school than staying at home. Therefore, please liaise with the child's social worker to discuss this if you have any young people whom you believe fits in to this category. Within this document, the Government is also clear that it will reimburse schools for the additional expenses that they incur during the coronavirus period, including for Easter schools. Issues regarding staff in maintained schools who work over the Easter break being able to take time off at other times are covered in the human resources advice on SchoolsNet and can be accessed via the link below.

<https://schoolsnet.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/administration/frequently-asked-questions-for-school-based-employees-number-2-26032020.pdf>

Please keep abreast of both the council's main website and also SchoolsNet for ongoing updates.

Once again, thank you to you and all of your staff for continuing to support the county's children and young people during these exceptional times.

Yours sincerely

Iain Peel

Alison Noble

Iain Peel

Service Director Schools and Learning
Children's Services

Alison Noble

Service Director Early Help and Safeguarding
Children's Services