

Public

For the attention of headteachers.

Dear Headteacher,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and all of your staff for all of your hard work and commitment to the county's children and young people during this unprecedented period of time.

You are at the front end of working with young people and I know you are doing your best to provide a great education whilst also managing the anxieties of your pupils, students and of their families too.

As you can imagine we are receiving a huge volume of calls for advice and support. As an executive team in Derbyshire County Council we are meeting several times each day to review and analyse the latest government and public health advice; it is essential we follow this advice and all local guidance is published on SchoolsNet and the County Council's main website. Please regularly review these websites for any updates.

I know some Headteachers have already taken the very difficult decision to partially close their school. The current government advice on this is clear and that schools should only close following advice from public health England, although we are aware that this could change at any point. There may be some local circumstances where your staffing is especially depleted rather than a local outbreak and in which case I know that some schools have maintained core provision for some key year groups and also provision for the children of key workers. Other schools are also offering childcare provision for key workers as well.

Like you, Derbyshire County Council is also delivering services directly to children whether this be via foster families, children's homes, addressing safeguarding issues, providing school meals or other direct support. You may notice that we adopt different methods of working and this is to ensure that we minimise the chances of an infection being brought directly in to your school.

We are looking to ongoing contingency planning and should the decision be made to close all schools we will wish to have further dialogue with you about what other measures your staff team could contribute to that will assist the most vulnerable children and support the child care issues of critical key worker groups. This is a matter we will also be discussing with union colleagues.

This is a challenging period for all of us and we can all continue to achieve the very best for the county's children as we work together over the forthcoming months.

Once again, many thanks for everything that you are doing and please stay abreast of updates via the council's website and SchoolsNet.

Jane Parfremment | Executive Director for Children's Services