



# Bure Valley School

Part of the Aylsham Learning Federation

Friday 20 March 2020

Dear Parents,

## Emergency Optional Childcare Provision for Vulnerable Children and Key Workers

As you are aware, schools in the Aylsham Learning Federation (ALF) will close at the end of the day on Friday 20 March 2020 except for providing an optional emergency service for vulnerable children and the children of key workers.

This provision is non-statutory and is very much dependent on local circumstances and the goodwill of ALF staff and should be viewed as a provision of last rather than first resort. The government's most recent guidance (Guidance for schools, colleges and local authorities on maintaining educational provision, 2020) reinforces this perspective:

*The most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. **If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.***

*That is why the government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend. The fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society.*

Childcare provision will be offered by ALF schools to help support national efforts during the time of the coronavirus crisis. Staffing shortages may cause ALF settings to close at short notice and parents/carers must be mindful of this.

It is not a compulsory or guaranteed provision but an emergency provision. Any ALF provision will only cover normal school hours for each of the schools (8:50am to 3.10pm). ALF schools will make a decision as to whether they are able to provide care during the Easter holiday or on Bank Holidays in due course.

Vulnerable children are defined as children with an EHCP and all children with an allocated social worker such as looked after children, or children subject to child protection and family support arrangements. These children are able to access this optional provision in school if they cannot be cared for at home. ALF schools will have contacted these families to see if they need this optional emergency provision because they are unable to care for their children at home.

A list of key workers has now been released and is appended to this letter. I would ask

Executive Headteacher: Mrs J Paulina B.A. (Hons) M.Ed. (Cantab)  
Head of School: Mr J Dray B.A. (Hons)  
Deputy Headteachers: Mrs H Howard B.A. (Hons), Mrs H Bate B.A. (Hons)  
Director of Business and Community Strategy: Mrs J Tute-Parsons Dip.Ed. (Cantab) M.Ed. (Cantab)



parents and carers to read it carefully and the stipulations later in this letter in relation to demonstrating key worker status.

Given the late notice of key worker groups and to ensure safe operation of provision, schools in ALF intend to open for the children of key workers from **Tuesday 24 March 2020**.

In order to access this optional service it will be the expectation that both parents fall into a key worker category. However we will consider other circumstances based on our capacity. In the case of single parent families, the expectation is only for the primary parent/carer to be in one of the key worker categories. We would also expect the service only to be accessed on days that key workers are scheduled to work. It would be unfair and inappropriate to place unnecessary burdens on ALF staff or to have children outside of the home environment where it is strongly advised that they should remain. We would not expect to provide daytime cover for parents who work on the nightshift either, as they will be home with their children and so available to provide care and support where required.

**It is expected that alternative childcare options would be explored first before using any ALF provision as it maintains social distancing. Elderly relatives or those from vulnerable groups should not be used for childcare.**

**We would expect all families using the service to provide proof of their key worker status.** This could be a photo of an id badge, letter of employment, recent wage slip or another appropriate piece of evidence to show that they are employed in a key worker role. This would need to be brought in for the first day of the provision to ensure that we can allocate our capacity appropriately. "If workers think they fall within the critical categories above they should confirm with their employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service"(Guidance for schools, colleges and local authorities on maintaining educational provision, 2020). **Without this evidence in advance, we would not be able to proceed with any childcare provision.** Parents also need to be aware that we will have to limit available places and that **places will be prioritised based upon the government guidance.** Therefore, you are making an application for a place and we will let you know if you have been successful. We will inform you as soon as possible, but by 12pm Monday 23 March at the latest.

We would also expect parents/carers to be very mindful of the all of the health guidance in relation to coronavirus. We propose to do temperature checks for the children who come to our emergency childcare provision. We will have arrangements to isolate children should they show symptoms such as a new persistent and continuous cough and/or a temperature of 37.8°. Parents and carers will need to be able to have children picked up at short notice should they fall ill. We would then expect families to

self-isolate for 14 days as per the guidance. This will help us to safeguard the health of other students and of our staff.

At Bure Valley School, pupils will be expected to work on Google Classroom tasks, in isolation but under supervision. There will be no communal sharing of resources and children will be encouraged to social distance. They will not be taught, as this is emergency childcare rather than an educational provision.

They will need to bring a packed lunch on any day that they are in school. Children in receipt of free school meals will have received a voucher to help fund school lunches. Sometime will also be set aside for spending time outside to get fresh air and let off steam. We will need to maintain a close watch on capacity and staffing ratios to ensure that it is practical to provide adequate social distancing to protect pupils and staff from the risk of infection.

If you believe that you fall into one of the key worker categories and you are unable to leave your children safely at home please complete the reply slip below and return to Mrs Turner (admin@burevalley.norfolk.sch.uk) by 2pm today to help us plan how we might be able to support you.

We will contact key workers shortly to give them further details about when we will be able to begin our childcare arrangements and if they have been allocated a place for any given day. We will review the position for after Easter with parents and carers next week.

**Even if you have already told us of your circumstances by phone or email please inform us again using the attached form.**

We all need to ensure that we follow the key principle that, "if it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be" (Guidance for schools, colleges and local authorities on maintaining educational provision, 2020).

Thank you again for your patience and support at this challenging time and for taking the time to read through this letter and accompanying guidance carefully.

Yours faithfully,

Duncan Spalding

Executive Headteacher

Jamie Olney

Head of School

**Key worker childcare reply slip**

Name of child / children and class/tutor Group:

\_\_\_\_\_

ALF Schools attended: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete as appropriate:

A. I am a single parent key worker in the following category:

B. We are both key worker parents/carers in the following categories:

And

Days required in first week of provision Tuesday 24 March - Friday 27 March (circle as required)

Tuesday 24

Wednesday 25

Thursday 26

Friday 27

## **Appendix- List of key worker categories**

### **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 distributors 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.

## **References**

Guidance for schools, colleges and local authorities on maintaining educational provision. (2020, March 19). GOV.UK.

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