24th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

**Coronavirus – Covid 19 School Closure to all children**

We know and understand how precious your children are to you and your family, as they are to us too. We have therefore reached the difficult decision to remain closed after much soul searching and deliberation. We were asked by the Department for Education to make decisions on a case by case basis and having consulted with you all by phone we have come to the conclusion that for the safety and wellbeing of your children and our staff we will remain closed until the Government says it is safe to re-open.

We have followed the advice of our colleagues in similar specialist schools who have undertaken risk assessments and are adhering to social distancing recommendations of 2 meters. We understand our responsibilities to families that are Key Workers and vulnerable children, however our concerns regarding social distancing of 2 metres, not only between staff and pupils, but also keeping children at a safe distance from one another; alongside meeting the medical needs of some pupils by staff who are potentially untrained and unfamiliar with your child and the physical contact in supporting children who will inevitably be distressed or dysregulated all contravene Government advice and has informed our decision.

As you will appreciate our children require personal intimate assistance which would require our staff to physically interact with your children which is against all advice. Already we have over 32 staff absent from work and this number is likely to significantly rise over the coming days ahead. We are unable to guarantee that the staff we do have available at any one time are trained for children’s individual medical needs. The Children’s Nursing Team, although available to support health needs in the community, are not able to provide additional training for staff and it would be therefore unsafe for this group to be in school.  It would be inadvisable to set up a service that is also likely to change in the short-term as we move into lock down.

We do understand your anxieties and your child’s Class Teacher will be in contact with you on at least a weekly basis, more if you require it. They will be checking you are ok? They will check you have access to the internet and signpost you to our website and Facebook for ideas and support for your children.  They will encourage you to join your Class DoJo for updates and to keep in touch. They will check your children are not going hungry and offer practical help. They will ask if you require access to school equipment over the weeks ahead. We can liaise on your behalf with Social Care and Health colleagues.

We will keep posting updates via Facebook, Twitter, and our home to school messaging service and the school website. Can you ensure that we have your latest phone number and can we encourage you to use our Facebook page to share your ideas and support each other at this difficult time.

Our Admin Team will be in touch to explain how families can access Free School Meals support shortly.

If you are feeling anxious and would like to talk to one of the Leadership Team we are still here in school for you between 9:00am-3:00pm.

We all send our love and best wishes and hope that we all come out the other side fit, healthy and well.

Take care,

Chris Rollings  
Head Teacher