



PensMeadowSchool

Living, Growing, Learning

20 March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Firstly I would like to thank you for your continued support during this extremely difficult period. We understand that the uncertainty will be causing many of our families much anxiety.

I have been in regular discussions with the Headteachers of the other special schools within the Dudley Borough and Dudley Local Authority Officers. I have also taken advice from NASEN.

On 18th March 2020, school received confirmation from the DfE that any adults or children with an underlying medical condition should be exercising social distancing and therefore not be in school.

The underlying medical conditions were as stated for adults under 70 with an underlying health condition and are listed below. This list includes those with a learning disability.

- *chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as [asthma](#), [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease \(COPD\)](#), emphysema or [bronchitis](#)*
- *chronic heart disease, such as [heart failure](#)*
- *[chronic kidney disease](#)*
- *chronic liver disease, such as [hepatitis](#)*
- *chronic neurological conditions, such as [Parkinson's disease](#), [motor neurone disease](#), [multiple sclerosis \(MS\)](#), a learning disability or cerebral palsy*
- *[diabetes](#)*
- *problems with your spleen – for example, [sickle cell](#) disease or if you have had your spleen removed*
- *a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as [HIV and AIDS](#), or medicines such as [steroid tablets](#) or [chemotherapy](#)*
- *being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)*

The school, in consultation with the Local Authority, therefore took the decision to close to pupils as were unable to ensure that those included on this list could be safeguarded from the virus.

All staff with underlying medical conditions have been asked to refrain from coming into work. This alongside those staff who are self-isolating or have other long term absence means that we currently have 38 staff off.



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Advice from NASEN states the following –

It is not a requirement that all children and young people with Education, Health and Care plans attend school during the period of closure. Section 1.10 of the information for families is clear that decisions should be made locally based on risk assessments of health and safeguarding.

The general principle is that children should be at home if it is safe for them to do so.

Based on this current information we have made the decision to remain closed to pupils until after the Easter break.

I am aware that this will pose issues for some parents who have been classed as key workers on the government list. Headteachers have been asked by Cath Knowles, Interim Director of Children Services, to gather and forward the names of these pupils so that the Local Authority can look at the care support needed. I am working closely with Old Park School who have made the same decision to close to see how we can support the Local Authority longer term in carrying out these care duties.

If you have been classed as a key worker and would like school to forward your details to the Local Authority for support during school closure, please confirm this in an email to the info mailbox. (info@pens-meadow.dudley.sch.uk)

School will continue to provide a packed lunch for those pupils in receipt of free school meals and we will be updating the school website with more home learning ideas at the weekend.

I will ensure all families are kept up to date with the ongoing situation through the school website, Parent Mail and Facebook.

Kind Regards

Mrs Marie Hunter

Headteacher