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### SCHOOL CLOSURE UPDATE

Dear parent/carer,

On behalf of all the staff may I take the opportunity to thank all those parents who have kept their children safely at home and engaged in their home learning today. It was great to see the children messaging us and sending us examples of their work which we have been able to share with our wider Newchurch family via Twitter. Please keep these going.

Thank you also for your patience yesterday whilst the online platform was managing the demand of so many children accessing their learning tasks. We are working hard to look at an alternative platform which should run in a more efficient way. In the meantime, there should be enough tasks for the children to do until we reach the Easter break.

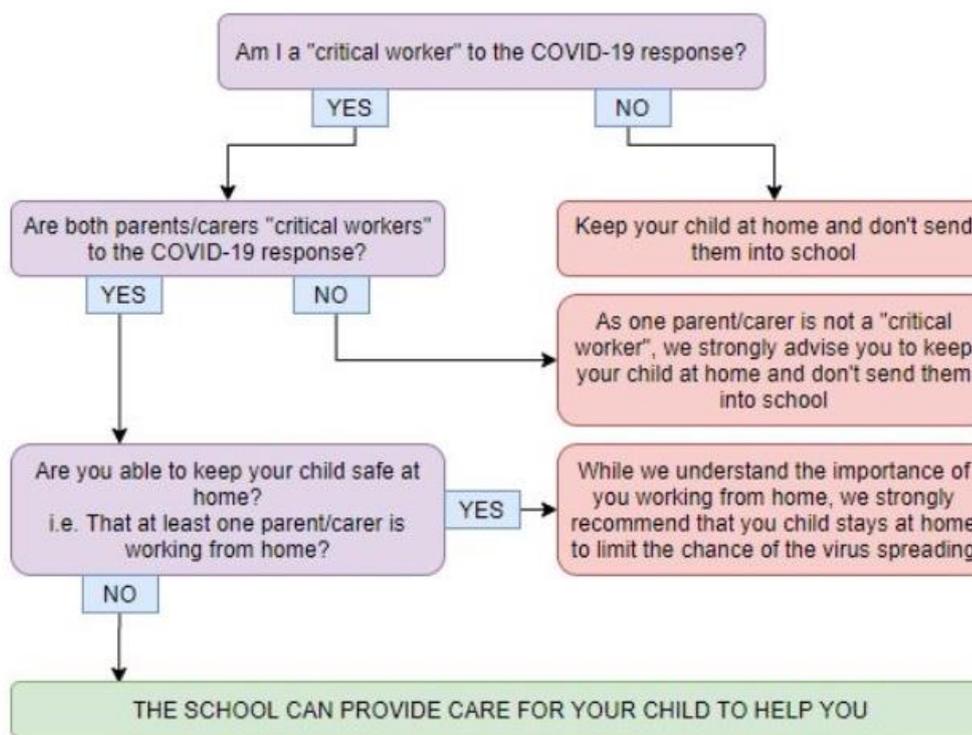
We are very keen to keep our school community together – ‘Keeping the flame burning’ - so we yesterday we looked at ways to unite us whilst we are so dispersed. Using the National Awareness Weeks as our guide, we will be setting family challenges which we hope you will join in with and send us posts for our Twitter and Facebook feeds.

For those children who are eligible for free school meals, you should receive some communication today regarding vouchers to support the purchase of goods at supermarkets whilst the school is closed. We have loaded the vouchers for the next two weeks and will replenish these on a fortnightly basis. If you have any problems, please contact the school office.

We will be providing childcare for our key workers through the Easter holidays to enable them to continue their important role in beating this dreadful virus. We would appreciate any key worker who requires childcare, and does not have any other option, to email the school: [newchurch\\_primary@warrington.gov.uk](mailto:newchurch_primary@warrington.gov.uk) We will be able to deploy staff once we have an indication of the numbers.

Yesterday, there were some enquires as to the identification of key workers and the criteria used by the school. Hopefully, this simple diagram will show you how the decision was made in line with the government guidelines.





We have been challenged by some parents who have asked that their child be allowed to have childcare when they are able to be looked after at home. The guidance clearly states that if there is someone at home to look after the children then they are to remain at home. I appreciate that it is difficult supervising your children whilst they are doing their home learning and having to complete your own work if working remotely, but the whole country is engaging in activities such as this during this challenging time.

For children who are classed as vulnerable (have an EHCP or Social Worker), the guidance states that it is up to the school to assess if the child is to attend school or stay at home if there is an adult available to support them.

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

As always, at the heart of any decisions made is what is best for the children and the consistent message being given is to keep your child at home where possible. The childcare provided by the staff of Newchurch is for those critical workers who have no option but to leave their children in our care.

The aim of the school closure is to reduce the number of children and staff in schools to prevent the spread of the virus. Our wonderful staff are also key workers and are willingly supporting the children of the critical key workers, whilst also making arrangements for their own families.

From the bottom of my heart, please can I ask that if you are a family who has someone identified as a key worker but has the capacity for your child to be looked after at home, please do so. However frustrating it is, sending your child into school because you can't get any work done at home is increasing the risk to the families of those on the front line. Staff are at risk of getting sick, which would mean the school would need to close and this service would not be available to those who need it the most.



Following the Prime Minister's speech yesterday, can I make a plea to follow his guidance. If we work together, we can beat this!

Many thanks in anticipation of your compassion and respect for the decisions we are making.

With kindest regards,



Mrs J Narraway

Head Teacher



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