

James Brindley Academy  
Bell Barn Road  
Birmingham  
B15 2AF  
Tel: 0121 666 6409 ext.

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to you following yesterday's government update on blanket school closures which on the surface seems pretty straightforward, however the practicalities of the details around supporting children of key workers and those in vulnerable groups is proving difficult to comprehend.

Government direction is that all schools in England will close at the end of the school day on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March, until further notice due to the Coronavirus pandemic. This will mean that we will move to a remote learning model from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.

### **Pupils with EHCPs**

*"Special schools are advised to make assessment on a case by case basis of the health and safeguarding considerations of pupils on a EHCP. For some, they will be safer in an education provision. For others, they will be safer at home. The Secretary of State trusts leaders to make these decisions."*

Our stance regarding young people with EHCPs is that the vast majority will be absolutely safe in the loving care of their family homes and should be adhering to the guidance around social isolation for not only their own wellbeing but that of their wider family groups. We would anticipate that most of our young people with EHCPs will therefore not attend school during the enforced closures.

### **Vulnerable pupils**

For families of young people deemed to be additionally vulnerable, we will be engaging in professional conversations with Social Workers and other agencies today to ascertain the best type of provision that will be needed for this group. Parents/carers will be contacted by their child's Centre Leader to gauge interest in additional provision during the period of enforced closure.

## **Safeguarding**

For the young people identified to be particularly vulnerable, we will work closely with the Local Authority to offer a safeguarding package. We will continue to stay in touch with pupils and their families in order to continue to offer support at this difficult time. We also retain our safeguarding responsibilities and will communicate with other professionals who may also be involved with your child in order to share home visits and to communicate any issues that may arise.

For children and young people who are on a Child Protection or Child in Need Plan, a named Designated Safeguarding Lead (who is likely to be their Centre Leader) will be touch with their Social Worker. The family home will be visited once or twice a week by either the Social Worker or James Brindley member of staff. If families are isolated, the young person will be seen at the door step or through a window. Welfare phone calls will also be made once or twice a week to speak to both the parent/carer and the young person themselves.

For those children and young people who are not on a Child Protection or Child in Need plan, families will be contacted by telephone fortnightly. A member of James Brindley staff will speak to both the parent/carer and the young person themselves, where appropriate.

## **Care of children of key workers**

We also know that some of our parents will be required to continue to work because they provide essential community services. This includes: front line emergency services (nurses, doctors, police officers, firefighters etc). For this reason and to support the community at this difficult time, we will have a skeleton staff at one or more of our sites who are able to provide care for the children of these key workers during the period of our school closure. This will be for a small number of parents who provide these essential services and **have no other childcare arrangements.**

We aim to provide this care between the hours of **8.30am– 3.00pm at our Parkway (KS4 Centre), Bell Barn Road, B15 2AF**, but this will heavily dependent on staffing and the number of children needing this provision.

Emergency worker care will be a different provision to a normal school day. Children will be in mixed age groups and supervised by members of staff across the academy. Whilst we can't guarantee that your child will be necessarily familiar with all members of staff, we can confirm that staff utilised will be staff employed by the academy and therefore meet our safer recruitment guidelines in line with our statutory safeguarding duty.

**The staff on duty will support the young people in accessing their online learning and other activities but will not be offering formalised teaching**, however our normal safeguarding and behaviour policy will apply.

## **Transport/Travel arrangements**

Once we are clear on the number of pupils attending our additional provision, we will clarify how pupils will be transported to and from the identified Centre.

At this point we are unable to ascertain what the catering provision will be as we outsource this service and are unsure if they are able to continue to provide catering. We will provide lunch daily – which might not always be a hot meal.

### **Free School Meals**

The Leadership Team are currently working with our caterers to ensure we are able to provide Free School Meals or equivalent to those pupils who are entitled to receive them. Further information regarding this will be provided at the earliest opportunity.

### **Additional provision during enforced closure**

In using this provision, parents agree that the academy is striving to assist the government efforts to tackle COVID-19 by providing supervision arrangements for pupils who are children of emergency workers so that they can carry out essential work-related duties.

When deciding to make use of this provision, please note that none of our staff have been tested for COVID-19, however, the Academy will do all that is reasonable to ensure that all young people remain safe, including regular cleaning of our premises and emphasising the importance of thorough hand washing to pupils. We will also ensure staff do not come to work showing any symptoms.

As per the advice from Public Health England, if your child or a family member has a high temperature (37.8), a new persistent cough or a symptom of the coronavirus, they will need to remain at home.

For parents wishing to use this facility we ask that you complete the slip below and return by **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020**. When requesting this provision, please also inform us of your occupation. We will inform you by telephone of the plans for next week by the end of tomorrow.

Yours sincerely,

**Hardip Bissell**  
**Principal**