

Parents/Carers

Please ask for:

Email: generalenquiries@somerset.gov.uk

Date: 14 May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Prime Minister's Announcement – Coronavirus and Schools

The Government is asking educational settings to prepare to extend provision beyond the current arrangements, from the beginning of June, depending on the national position with the COVID-19 virus.

Initially the extension of provision will involve early years settings/nurseries and primary schools - Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 only, with some face to face support for Years 10 and 12 – you can find the full details here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>.

Until the 1 June at least the current DfE guidance remains in place which is that schools and early years providers are still 'closed' to all, but the children of essential and key workers or vulnerable children as defined in the current guidance. This can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing> .

From June onwards settings and schools' priority will be to continue to make provision available for vulnerable children and children of key workers. Not all schools or settings will be able to offer full time provision to the identified year groups given the guidance they have to follow around pupil numbers, safe working and also staff availability. This may lead to a range of arrangements being put in place e.g. part-time provision, staggered start and finish times, and short weeks.

Headteachers and Early Years leaders will be contacting you to advise what provision they will be able to make as soon as they are able to. Schools will receive the full support of Somerset County Council services including public health to plan the extension of provision. Each educational setting is different, and we all need to support the professionalism and judgement of education leaders who will be making difficult decisions over the next few weeks and months, based on the context of their school, setting and community.

I appreciate that this position may cause difficulties for some of you but I would ask that you understand that early years providers, and headteachers and staff in schools have been working under a huge amount of pressure during 'lockdown' and they need time to plan in detail and make adequate preparations in order to be able to 're-open' for your children, safely and effectively

Finally, thank you for all that you are doing during these incredibly challenging times to support and work with your local school or early years setting.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julian Wooster', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Julian Wooster
Director of Children's Services