



23rd March 2020

Dear Parents and carers,

You will be aware that the school has offered to provide care for children of keyworkers critically involved in the frontline of responsibility during the current coronavirus Covid-19 situation.

Please note: This care is to only be used if no other care can be provided by partners and families, and the school office must be notified beforehand so that we can confirm a place for your child/children. **If parents and children arrive on in school without a booking they may be turned away.**

Guidance from the government makes it very clear that it is to be in exceptional cases where parents/carers access this facility. Even if one parent in a household may qualify it is expected that the partner/ or another family member takes responsibility for looking after the children.

This is clearly one time when we must ensure that we do what is absolutely necessary to protect both your family and those who are absolutely required to help fight the disease, treat those affected and directly serve the remaining community.

If parents choose to use the facility as free 'childcare' we will be creating an unsafe grouping that will not help the situation and may worsen the situation.

For our Wolverhampton schools in particular you should be aware that currently Wolverhampton is one of the UK's most significant 'hot spots' for the virus. Our community needs to minimise the risk of transmission by remaining at home unless absolutely necessary.

I would ask you to review your need for this provision by checking the information below. If you do need our support and provision to allow you to work in an identified critical area of work (health care in a workplace, supplies and deliveries and the other groups published), you must let our schools know via the front office.

For those who are in direct and urgent need of the provision, we look forward to seeing you on tomorrow to confirm your booking requirements.

Wolverhampton Local Authority (Taken from Headteacher's briefing – Friday 20.3.20)

- The government have published guidance about maintaining educational provision for children who need it.
- The guidance applies to schools, FE colleges and early years settings, both state-funded and independent.

- A key principle that **if it is possible for a child to be home, then they should be.**
- However, if a child need specialist support, is **vulnerable** or **has a parent who is a critical worker** then educational provision will be available to them – this is an offer rather an expectation that the child will attend.

Children of critical workers

- A list of critical workers has been published. It is sufficient for a child to have one parent who is a key worker for them to be offered provision, **however if it is possible for the child to remain at home in the care of another parent or carer, then they should do or if the parent works normally from home.**
- If workers think that they fall into the critical categories **they should confirm with their employer that their specific role is necessary for continuation of this essential public service.**

Vulnerable children

To identify which vulnerable children should be attending schools we have agreed the following principles:

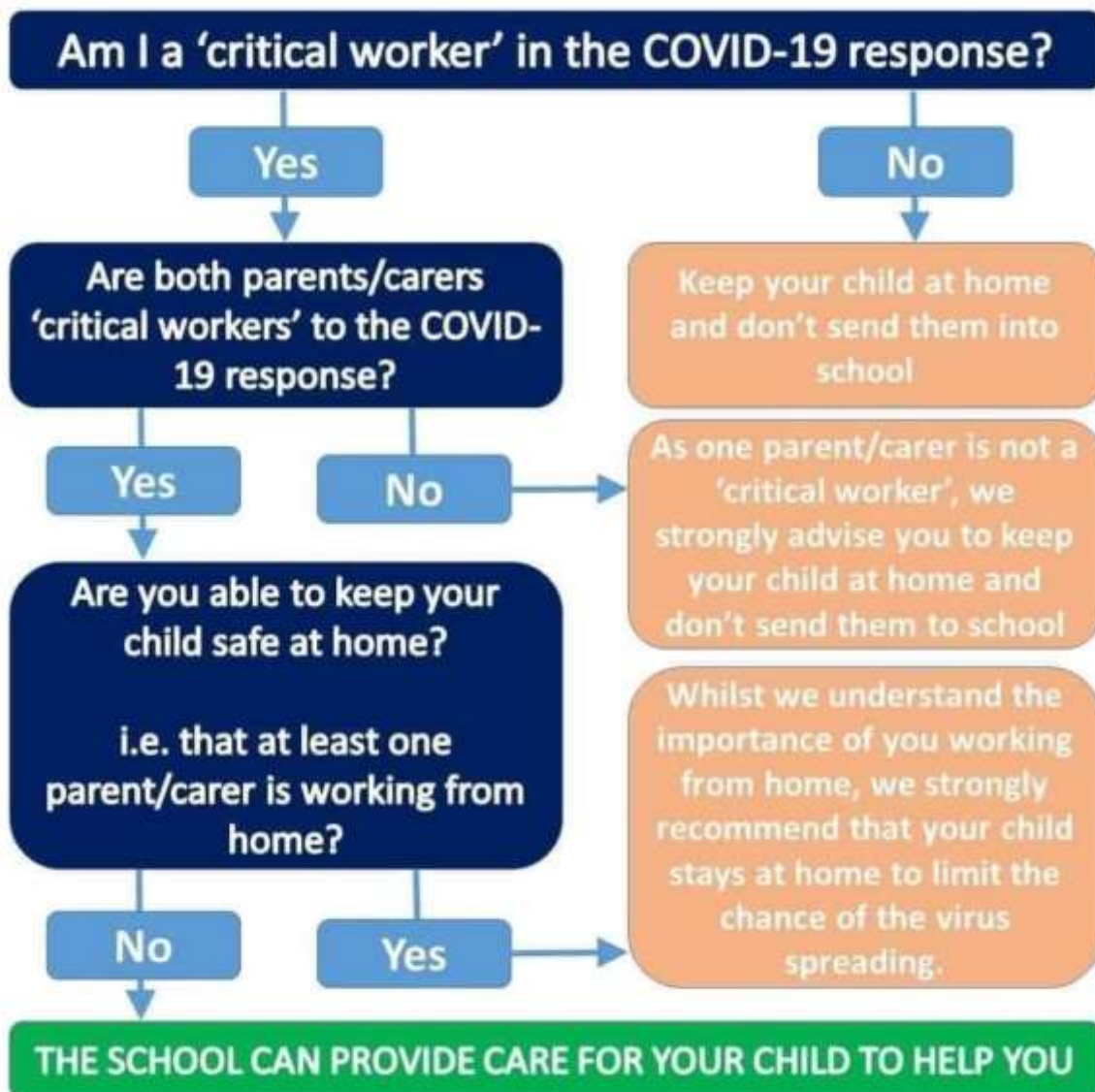
- Our general expectation is that children on a child protection plan should continue to attend school.
- **Children in care should usually not be expected to attend school,** unless there is agreement between the school and the social worker that the child being at home poses a risk, for example to the stability of their home placement.
- For children subject to child in need planning, the social worker will assess the need for the child to attend school, and advise the family and school whether school attendance is necessary.
- For children supported through an early help plan, schools and strengthening families workers should review and assess whether the children needs to attend school.
- The Government has committed to ensuring that children entitled to free school meals will continue to be able access these. The Council will work with schools to implement arrangements for this, **but in general we would not expect that needing a free school meal is, in itself, a reason that a child would need to attend school (unless it is simply to pick this up).**

Children with education, health and care plans

- As for children of critical workers, children with EHCPs should be able to access educational provision, but it is not expected that they must do so, and **if children with EHCPs can remain at home they should do so.**
- Where a child has an EHCP, the school should discuss with parents/ carers whether the child needs to continue to attend school.
- Where a child has an EHCP and the child will not be in school, the school should judge whether the health and care elements of the EHCP can continue to be delivered. If health and care needs cannot be met at home, a review with relevant agencies should be called to ensure that there is an appropriate plan to meet these needs.

You will see from this guidance that is an 'exception' where care is needed in school and I urge parents to act responsibly to ensure only those who require the service utilise it and others stay at home as the guidance suggests is best. This information has been sent to us from Wolverhampton Local Authority and it reflects the latest guidance provided by the government, therefore it applies to all schools in all areas across the UK.

I would also like to urge you all to review the diagram on the following page when considering your childcare needs:



Thank you all for your co-operation at this difficult time.

Yours sincerely

Amarjit Cheema OBE
Chief Executive Officer