

**Breakspeare School**

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19th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, I would like to express our sincere thanks for the incredible expressions of support and understanding we have received via the phone, emails and in face to face discussions with many of you during this challenging week.

The Government and Secretary of State have informed us that all schools are closing from Friday, but schools will remain open to vulnerable children and key workers' children who are needed at the frontline. As a maintained school provider The Sunflower Federation takes our guidance from Hertfordshire County Council and Government.

Government information for parents and carers:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

We endeavour to maximise our capacity to keep the school open for as many pupils as possible. We also want to do the very best to support our students, families and staff safely, fairly and equally.

Commencing next week some of our students will continue their learning at school and some will continue learning at home. I will explain our arrangements for next week -

SCHOOL PROVISION

We have considered the following aspects of school life

- Your decision about whether you prefer your child to access home learning or to attend school next week.
- We have explored our staff's circumstances to ascertain our staffing capacity in our schools for the coming weeks.
- Children's community nursing service is currently under enormous pressure and they haven't been able to provide us with a cover nurse to Meadow Wood School during our school nurse, Sarah's absence.
- School nurse is currently available at Breakspeare School; however NHS may decide to reemploy her to other services. If this would be the case we would need to risk assess our placement offer for some of our students.
- Importance of contingency in school administration and premises management in line of current staff absences.
- We have taken into account those pupils whose parents are 'key workers', who have access to free school meals, have a CIN plan, complex specific issues or live in a single parent home.

Therefore we have made the decision to re-locate Meadow Wood School to Breakspeare School premises. This will maximise the effective use of all human resources including leadership, teaching, premises manager and finance management, HR and school administration when preparing for the uncertainty of the future. Most importantly this means that we are going to keep our schools open until it becomes unreasonable and unsafe to stay open due to reduced staffing levels, sickness or serious risk to the school community. We will review our ability to remain open on a daily basis.

This decision is supported by the staff. Breakspeare School welcomes their Meadow Wood students and colleagues to Abbots Langley; Meadow Wood School staff agree that this decision secures the best use of resources. The Sunflower Federation's commitment to operate as one community is its strengths during these difficult times as it secures provision for both schools.

In order for us to be able to prepare our new combined provision we need to close the school on Monday 23rd for the students at both Meadow Wood and Breakspeare Schools. The school opens at the Breakspeare site on Tuesday 24th for those Breakspeare and Meadow Wood students whose parents have agreed that their child will attend school. We understand that Monday's closure is highly inconvenient but we need this time to prepare students' classes, staffing, resources and the environment. Please note that we will have only 6 classes for Breakspeare students and 2 classes for Meadow Wood students; all classes are merged from 2-3 current classes. All classes will have 4-6 students each. We anticipate to have 35 Breakspeare students and 10 Meadow Wood students. We will contact these families individually later today.

We want to ensure that our students' school experience is positive and well managed as it includes new class friends, new staff and environment. On Monday my staff will make all necessary preparations for your child. We will inform you on Monday about the staff and students in your child's new class.

We will liaise with the school transport and school catering for Meadow Wood students.

At this moment in time, I am unable to confirm if any NHS therapists will be on the school site to support children with their programmes.

ACCESSING LEARNING AT HOME

For those students' whose parents have chosen to self-isolate, their child's learning will continue at home supported by regular contact with their current class teacher. The teachers will share learning resources with you either via the school admin email, post or using the online learning platform 'Edmodo'; this depends on what is the most appropriate way for your child. Please don't hesitate to contact the teacher via school admin; they are happy to help and advice.

Meadow Wood parents will continue to use admin@meadowwood.herts.sch.uk email but to call to Breakspeare School tel. 01923 263645.

Whilst accessing education at home, we provide you with pastoral care, advice and support when needed. Please contact myself or my deputies with these matters.

I need to remind parents that, for any child who is socially distanced, or is accessing education from their home, the first port of call for any medical issues is their GP and existing medical team.

We will send further information about accessibility to free school meals, whilst accessing education at home, next week.

FINALLY

We have at the Sunflower Federation a genuine compassion and determination to get things right for our students, families and staff. Whatever decision you as a family make about your child's education at this uncertain time, we are here to support you.

I will update you regularly during the coming weeks and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions.

Please look after yourselves, your families and friends

Merja

Note:

- Currently we don't have any confirmed cases of COVID-19 virus amongst our students, parents or staff.
- **It is likely that guidance to schools may change quickly so please follow your emails and text messages.**