



Sunday 22nd March 2020

School Closure Update from The GST Schools

Dear Parents/Carers,

Our school leaders have now prioritised need and allocated emergency childcare places in all of our schools. The situation and demand on all of us has been immense and unprecedented. Thank you for your support so far in our joint actions to support critical workers. We would like to remind you of some of the principles around the care which schools are providing and the arrangements for learning at home:

- **We are open to provide care for the children of those who are working in a job which is critical to the COVID-19 response only.**
- We have all worked to have a minimum number of children and staff in school at any one time, this means that children will be in mixed age groups and might not be with staff who are known to them.
- Children will not be following the usual curriculum and activities will not be planned or delivered in the usual way.
- We will not be targeting children to make progress or to learn new material, and nor will we be reporting to parents on progress.
- We will be trying hard to practise social distancing in school, but as you will understand, this will not be possible with all pupils, especially the youngest.
- Each school has a different set of arrangements for learning at home but we would all like to stress that we do not expect you to home-school your children and try to make up for any learning gaps as a result of the partial closure.
- Your school will tell you what their specific expectations are around how much of the suggested learning and activities you should complete, this could be different for the First and Middle Schools.
- We know that some of you are working from home while looking after children, or may become unwell - it is not realistic that you can provide learning support for young children while you are in this situation.
- We are concerned about the mental health of all of our pupils – it is more important that you provide some stability, reassurance and love than trying to devise a home curriculum and put additional pressure on yourselves and your children to complete activities.
- Teachers in first schools will not be marking children's work but lots of us will be celebrating on our social media and we all encourage you to share pictures of what children are up to and what they achieve.
- Teachers in middle schools have a variety of ways in which they will acknowledge children's achievements and they will inform you of what these are, if they haven't done so already.
- When we return to school, teachers will tailor the curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils, as they always do.

Most importantly, please take account of the advice of the Secretary of State for Education, who this weekend has said:

'Only send your child to school on Monday if you have to, because your job is critical to our COVID-19 response. If you are able to keep your child at home, you should.'

If you have been offered a childcare place for Monday and you think you can avoid using it, then please turn it down. It is quite clear from all of the advice from the NHS and The Government that bringing children and staff to school increases the risk of the spread of infection and will therefore inevitably lead to a greater strain on the NHS and more fatalities in our communities. While this sounds bleak, it is the reality which we face.

Please make sure that your contact details are up to date with your child's school and check and read all communications from school and the GST. We are all fully aware that whatever arrangements we have in place will change rapidly and we will need you to be up to date.

Thank you for your cooperation and your support.

Mrs Moore
Regent Farm First School

Mr Ward
Grange First School

Mr Adams
South Gosforth First School

Mrs Massey
Archbishop Runcie First School

Ms Mckenna
Broadway East First School

Mrs Ash
Dinnington First School

Mrs McKay
Brunton First School

Mr Stout
Gosforth East Middle School

Ms Webb
Gosforth Central Middle School

Mrs Turner
Archibald First School

Mrs Lamb
Gosforth Park First School