



Department for Children, Adults and Health

Headteacher  
All Primary & Secondary Schools

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

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Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to provide you with information on how South Gloucestershire Local Authority and school leaders will respond to the government's announcement yesterday (18/03/20) on school closures.

Yesterday afternoon the government announced that schools will close on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020, until further notice, for all children, with the exception of the children of key workers and vulnerable children (defined as those with a social worker or Education Health Care Plan). The list of key workers is being published tomorrow and your child's school will be sharing this information with you as soon as it becomes available. Each school will be contacting its parents/carers and asking whether you fit into these categories and wish your child to continue to attend school.

We need to get a sense of how many families may require this provision, so that we can plan to meet this need. We are working with school leaders to put plans in place rapidly to respond to the Government's requirements.

A lot of the detail linked to the announcement has yet to be published, such as how the provision for free school meals will work and how qualifications will be awarded in the absence of exams. We appreciate that this could be really upsetting for young people who have worked so hard but the Government is committed to working with the relevant bodies to ensure that young people are able to move onto their chosen destination without disruption. We will of course, keep families informed about this once the Government has published their strategy.

During the school closures, schools will be providing resources and learning ideas, including online activities, for you to support your child at home. We know this is a different way of working for us all. Schools will ensure they keep in touch with their parents/carers via their website and through text/email communication to let you know when their school will re-open.

The last week has been very challenging for us all but staff in our schools are demonstrating enormous commitment to maintaining high standards of education to our children and young people. The Secretary of state said in his speech to the House of Commons that headteachers, teachers and staff who work in schools are central to the country's response. Through working together, I know we will rise to this challenge and make the difference our country needs.

We thank you for your continued partnership in working to overcome this situation together.

Yours sincerely,

**Hilary Smith**  
**Head of Education, Learning and Skills**