



Sunnyside Moss Campus, Lumb Lane,
Audenshaw, Manchester M34 5SF
Tel: 0161 370 1312
Fax: 0161 301 5375
Email: admin@hawthorns.tameside.sch.uk
Website: www.hawthorns.tameside.sch.uk

Head of School: Mr Pierre Coiffait

Friday 20th March 2020

COVID-19 and Hawthorns School closure update

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thanks for your continued patience during these exceptional and demanding times for everyone. We are all having to deal with a real and serious threat we could never have imagined only a few months ago.

Over the last twenty-four hours we have considered the latest Government guidance to schools, parents and carers in relation to the ongoing COVID-19 emergency, and we have consulted with both the New Bridge Trust and Tameside Local Authority.

Our position remains the same – we believe that the safest place for Hawthorns children is to be at home because of the seriousness of the virus epidemic to their health. This is Government advice for everyone – the safest place to be is at home, minimising contact and to undertake social distancing. This will help to prevent the spread of the virus over the coming weeks and give the country the best chance of controlling the epidemic.

The impact of the virus has been considerable on the adults who work in our school, and we cannot provide a safe environment for all of our children with so few fit and healthy staff available. This position will deteriorate further in the coming days and weeks.

We must consider the health and safety of our children and adults at all times. In this respect, Hawthorns will remain closed to the majority of our pupils for the time being.

Schools are being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable and children whose parents have a crucial key working role in the COVID19 response. Children with at least one parent or carer who are identified as key workers by the Government can send their children to school, if required.

However, this does not mean you should automatically send your child to school. Remember, the aim is to minimise contact and limit the spread of the virus so that there is less chance of you or your child being infected. If you are a key worker and can keep your child at home, then it is important you do so.

In the last twenty-four hours, we counselled parents with a questionnaire, including asking if parents were key workers. This was really helpful to us in determining this group, and we are very appreciative for everyone's help and support in this task. The information gathered has allowed us to target support to the families of key workers as requested by the Government.

Hawthorns will be able to open with the limited staff available for a small number of pupils to support keyworkers identified in the guidance. The government has made it very clear that schools should do this on a case by case basis and decide which children need to stay at home, and which children meet the criteria as keyworkers. Parents of pupils where a place has been offered have now been informed.

If you feel you qualify as a key worker and need your child to attend school, then we would ask that you provide proof of employment (and shift pattern where requested). Please be aware that we may need to check the providence of this information. For key workers who work part time, we would expect your child to attend school on a part time basis. If you are unsure if you are a key worker or not, please see the list below or visit the Government's online information for clarification.

Please note that if the number of available staff at the school continues to decline, or if the numbers of pupils attending starts to rise, the use of surplus staff from mainstream schools and other sources will be drafted in to care for pupils. Alternatively, the offer of schooling may be moved to other sites across the New Bridge Trust in Oldham.

We will maintain regular contact with you through the school website to keep you updated of any further information and developments. It is important that you check this regularly as guidance is changing all of the time.

We expect everyone to recognise the challenges that the virus epidemic presents to us all. The current situation is not anyone's fault, and it is throwing us challenges we have not experienced before. We are doing our best in trying circumstances to ensure the safety of everyone connected to our school. Please follow the advice of our Prime Minister about working together to meet these challenges and to reduce the risks to our children and community.

Please keep your families safe this weekend.

Pierre Coiffait
Hawthorns School

National Guidance on Key Workers 19 March 2020

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors listed below, and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children will be prioritised for education provision:

Health and social care

This includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

Education and childcare

This includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who must remain active during the COVID-19 response to deliver this approach.

Key public services

This includes those essential to the running of the justice system, religious staff, charities and workers delivering key frontline services, those responsible for the management of the deceased, and journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting.

Local and national government

This only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the COVID-19 response or delivering essential public services such as the payment of benefits, including in government agencies and arms length bodies.

Food and other necessary goods

This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines).

Public safety and national security

This includes police and support staff, Ministry of Defence civilians, contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic), fire and rescue service employees (including support staff), National Crime Agency staff, those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas.

Transport

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

Utilities, communication and financial services

This includes staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure), the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage), information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies

to continue during the COVID-19 response, as well as key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services), postal services and delivery, payments providers and waste disposal sectors.

If workers think they fall within the critical categories above they should confirm with their employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service.