



Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

**Information for our Families re: COVID-19**

**Please keep up-to-date with developments in school by checking out Whole School & Class Story at Class Dojo. Headlines will be posted on our website: [www.valewood.co.uk](http://www.valewood.co.uk) and also via Twitter at [@ValewoodPrimary](https://twitter.com/ValewoodPrimary).**

Dear Families,

**COVID-19 Update: School Closes Today except for Children of Key Workers & Vulnerable Children**

At the end of today, School will close until further notice for the majority of children. We have never known a situation like this before and we are working hard to try and work through the information we are receiving. Thank you all for your amazing support over the last couple of days as we grapple with ever-evolving issues.

Government guidelines only came out after midnight, last night. The message is very clear: as a nation we need to do all that we can to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. **Wherever possible, children should stay safely at home to limit the chance of the virus spreading whilst they are off school.**

**We are all being asked to share and follow this advice:**

- **If it is possible for children to stay at home – they must.**
- **Parents should not rely on using grandparents, friends or family members with underlying health conditions to provide childcare.**
- **Parents should do everything they can to ensure that children are not mixing socially with others in a way that will spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults have been asked to follow.**

We will share this advice with the children this afternoon, in our child-friendly, Valewood way! If your child is already off school, please ensure they are aware of the need to follow this guidance.

Please know that I am having to ask staff to stay home, from Monday, given that they fall into the 'at risk' group. These members of staff have done an amazing job over the past few days and weeks and I thank them for their commitment and good spirits during this exceptional time. Now is the time to put themselves and their families first, in the interests of keeping everyone as safe as we possibly can.

Given this action, I too will have to work from home and so I can appreciate how difficult it is for those members of staff to step-away when their instinct is to step-up. We are sincerely grateful to all our staff who are fit, able and willing to care for the children in School, going forward from Monday. Thank you.

School will therefore be run with a rota of staff, providing care for those children **who have no other childcare provision.** **If you have alternative care for your children, I must stress, that you should ensure your child stays at home.**

The School Office will only be open between 10am and 1pm to allow staff to receive and respond to important phone calls. Alternatively, please message your child's class teacher via Class Dojo if you need to. Class teachers will be sharing suggested home learning planners with families on a weekly basis.

Once again, and from the bottom of my heart, thank you so much for your support and understanding. We, as a staff, have been completely overwhelmed with your positivity, understanding and generosity. I have even enjoyed a 'Zoom' video conference with some of our self-isolating Team 1 children- this really lifted my spirits!

I have told the children that it won't be long before we are all back together and they have had a great day today. I know our Team 6 pupils have been particularly upset, but I have reassured them that I already have plans for a 'festival' style get-together with a sleepover in school! Come on, Team 6! Letters of persuasion to be addressed to the Headteacher!

On a serious note, all our thoughts are with those of you who are key workers. I hope you all keep safe and well in the coming months. I will be keeping you all updated via Whole School Dojo in the coming weeks. Take care of each other.

Lots of love from all the team at Valewood.

**Helen Tantouri**