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Friday 20 March 2020

Dear parents,

At 3.30pm today, our school gates will close until the Coronavirus pandemic is brought under control. There was a definite air of sadness in the school playground this morning as many parents and children realised that this could be their last day of school for the academic year. Whilst understanding the unprecedented challenge we face, we are very sad should the school year end in this way. I particularly feel for year 6 children whose anticipated rites of passage have been denied them; the summer term is such a special and treasured memory for our oldest pupils.

### Key Workers

On Monday, school will open between **9am** and **3.30pm** for children of key workers. I wish to clarify that the school day will look very different for these children. We will ensure that they are able to access the same online learning activities as their peers who are at home, other than that, we will be providing emergency childcare to enable parents who do these essential jobs to work. Children will be in a mixed age group and in limited locations, although we still require them to wear school uniform. Children should only be sent to school if there is no safe alternative. If we have a large number of children at school, we are not adhering to social distancing requirements, which will affect our children, our staff and you. The government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend. I have taken the following wording from the governments FAQs:

*“Many parents working in these critical sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be. This is an offer to parents and carers and there is no requirement for parents and carers to send their children to school if they do not need or wish to.”*



## **Children Working at Home**

The first port of call is the school website 'Childrens Zone.' This has instructions about how to log on. Please be patient while we distribute the passwords as this is quite a task, and may still take into next week to complete! Mrs Purkiss has been working hard to make the website page as easy to follow and navigate as possible.

## **Visits and Trips**

All visits and trips for the summer term have been cancelled. Unfortunately, this includes the residential visits to HYMB (year 5) and to Kingswood in Ashford (year 6). Please be patient while we work out what refunds are due and how we can make these payments. Mrs Hukowski and I have talked to the children this afternoon and told them how disappointed we are also.

Even though school is partially closed, we are still here and working hard for the children. Teachers will continue to provide work on DB Primary and associated sites and parents will continue to receive regular updates from me. Our children will always be in our thoughts. We will say a prayer for you all each day, it would be lovely if you could do the same for us.

Once again, thank you for your many messages of support that are keeping us buoyant during challenging times. I wish all our families good health in the coming weeks and pray that the current crisis claims as few victims as possible.

*"Our God is near and asks us to be near one another. Perhaps right now we cannot draw physically to others for fear of contagion, but we can reawaken in ourselves a habit of drawing near to others through prayer and mutual help." (Pope Francis)*

Yours Sincerely,

Mr P O'Rourke  
Headteacher