

The Newman Catholic Collegiate



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Dear Parent/Carer who class as Key Workers

At this difficult time, I thank you for your efforts in reducing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. You will know more than most the importance of social distancing and people staying at home wherever possible.

It will of course be a last resort but the school will only be able to operate this care facility if it is safe to do so. If we are overwhelmed and parents do not support us we may be forced to close.

I am going to be blunt with you all. If parents attempt to abuse this provision, we will be left in the most awful position where we have to turn to parents of front line workers away meaning they can't attend work. If you have someone else at home who is not in the key worker group, we are asking you to ensure they look after your child.

To be clear we believe sending your child to school is placing them at increased risk of catching this potentially deadly virus and whilst they are less likely to develop symptoms this dramatically increases the threat of spreading this virus to members of your family and other vulnerable people in society and so encourage you ALL not do so unless absolutely necessary.

The most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading. That is why 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**. We have a duty of care for our staff and we are trying to minimise the number of staff required in school in our fight against this virus.

It is important to underline that school remains a safe place for children. However, the fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in school, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in our wider society.

As a school, we are asked to continue to provide care for a **limited number of children** - children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

The schools working hours have been adjusted to ensure we can provide this and so will be open from 9am until 3.30pm for your child if you work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined below. We ask that, if you fall in a key worker category, you do all you can to **minimise** the amount of time your child will need to be in school. For example, collecting your child early from school or dropping your child off late. We hope that many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home to reduce the risk of spreading the virus. **Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.** I thank you for respecting this key government aim.

Please, therefore, follow these key principles:

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, **then they should be.**
 2. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
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3. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.

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 childcare 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 arm's 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 you think you fall within the critical categories above, you should confirm with your employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, your specific role is **necessary** for the continuation of this essential public service.

This is an incredibly difficult time for all of us. **Please do not be offended we will ask for proof of your role in public service from your employer.** We simply need to protect our pupils, our staff and the wider society from the spread of this awful virus. Where we are unclear the collegiate has set up a panel to decide if your child can be admitted or not. If it is decided that your child is not eligible the decision is final and we kindly request that you respect this.

Next steps:

1. Check with your employer that your specific role is **necessary** for the continuation of this essential public service and that they are happy to be contacted by school to confirm this fact.
2. Contact school by the end of Monday 23rd March in order to confirm that you are a key worker who meets the above and will need childcare. Please give the name of your line manager and contact number to Reception as they will be contacted. Please note that **no normal lessons will operate in school** due to severely reduced staffing. Children will complete the same activities that those at home are working on. They **must** wear full school uniform.
3. Please confirm how your child will be dropped off and collected from school.
4. You will need to communicate with us regarding sickness and absence as you would usually do.
5. In case of illness or an emergency in school, please change emergency contact details of elderly relatives or others who are vulnerable as we will have to call them if you are not available.
6. Please inform school every Monday morning what provision is required for the **following week**. For example, Monday morning, Tuesday all day, Friday morning etc. Remember that your child should not attend school unless it is **absolutely necessary** to protect our society.

If staffing levels drop to an unsustainable level due to the virus, we will inform you to contact the Local Authority who will seek to redirect you to a local school in your area that your child, or children, can attend.

I thank you, in anticipation, for your co-operation. Most importantly, thank you for your work in the fight against the coronavirus.

You are in our prayers.

Mr Beardmore
Senior Executive Leader
Newman Catholic Collegiate
