



20 March 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

Ref: **Supporting children (Years 8-10) of Key Workers in Ashfield Girls' High School**

Yesterday evening Minister of Education in Northern Ireland, Mr Peter Weir MLA, published a letter outlining how schools will close from the end of school today. However, details have been provided in relation to how schools will open with skeleton staff on Monday 23 March to support children of key workers.

As outlined by the Minister, supervision in schools will only be available for children of key workers in Years 8 – 10. Children who do not fall into this group should remain at home. It is vitally important that our school is made aware of how many children of key workers will be attending school on Monday morning to ensure appropriate supervision can be arranged in advance. If you are identified as a key worker, please inform us today by 3.30pm either by email (info@ashgirls.belfast.ni.sch.uk please use the words 'Key Worker' in the subject header) or telephone (028 90471744) – please bear with receptionists who will ask you some questions about your employer / profession.

When in school pupils would be expected to complete any work we have already set. We cannot guarantee access to a computer so your daughter should arrive to school prepared.

Schools have been asked to facilitate pupils in school whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 team who would have otherwise no option but to stay at home.

Before contacting school, please be aware that we will not be able to operate a 'normal' school day. Our school is already functioning with a reduced staffing and this is likely to worsen over time. The aim is to keep the number of pupils coming into school to a minimum.

Points to Consider

- Only children with **both** parents working as key workers and **both parents out at work at the same time** should consider attending school. In single parent families, the individual parent must be a key worker
- If possible, alternative childcare arrangements should be sought before deciding to send your daughter to school, for example with other family members, friends etc. Please try to use schools as a last resort. This is to try and limit the number of children and adults together in a small space and adhere to recent social distancing guidance
- School's normal opening and closing time will still apply (8.40am – 3.20pm)
- Please be advised that school will be performing childcare duties rather than teaching.





- School canteen will be open for break and lunch
- Pupils attending will be required to wear full school uniform

We would ask that you pay attention to the points outlined above before deciding to send your daughter to school.

To give some guidance the following outlines the broad categories of what would be defined as a key worker:

- Health & Social Care – this includes doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers and home carers.
- Education and Childcare – this includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who will remain active during the Covid-19 response
- Public safety and national security. This includes civilians and officers in the police (including key contractors), Fire and Rescue Service, prison service and other national security roles
- Transport – this will include those keeping air, water, road and rail transport modes operating during the Covid-19 response
- Utilities and Communication – this includes staff needed for oil, gas, electricity and water and key staff in telecommunications, post and delivery, services and waste disposal
- Food and other necessary goods (e.g. hygiene, medical etc)
- Other workers essential to delivering key public services
- Key national and local government

We would ask that you pay attention to the points outlined above before deciding to send your daughter to school. As advised in the Minister's letter the aim is to keep the number of pupils coming into schools to a minimum. Likewise, we fully understand the need to support you in your vital role and if the only option is to send your daughter to school, we will continue to look after them.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Louise Hanvey (Principal)

