

Dear Parents and Carers

These are unprecedented times and we all have a part to play in reducing the spread of the virus and ensuring those who work in key sectors can continue to do so.

As you will now be aware all schools will close today until further notice. Schools will then re-open on Monday to **provide care** to a limited number of children. It is important to remember that the fewer children travelling to and attending schools lowers the spread of the virus and the infection of vulnerable individuals.

The government has been very clear in its guidance that the most important contribution you can make is that if you can keep your child at home safely you should.

Schools in Halton will offer care for children who are vulnerable. Although care will be available for those children whose parents are critical to the COVID19 response we anticipate many of you will be able to ensure your child is kept at home and safely cared for.

It is important that you do not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in social distancing category such as grandparents, friends or family members with underlying conditions. Parent/carer should also do everything you can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus.

It is essential that we will all pull together to support our emergency services and key workers and you can do this by minimising your call on our limited resources. Therefore, children who do not fall into the defined groups should remain at home with the appropriate care. There may also be partners who work from home or other non-elderly family members who could provide childcare support.

I must stress schools are closed for public health reasons and the provision we are putting in place is an emergency measure. Please contact your school if you fall into the specific government defined categories and cannot make other childcare arrangements. Schools will attempt to provide learning opportunities for those in school and not in school. Please support our staff and each other by respecting the need for key workers to have access to appropriate childcare at this time.



The government has defined a vulnerable child to include children who are supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs, including child in need plans, on child protection plans, 'looked after' children, young carers, disabled children and those with [education, health and care \(EHC\) plans](#).

The full list of key workers is set out in “**Guidance for schools, colleges and local authorities on maintaining educational provision**”. A link is provided below.

If your school is closed and you are a key worker or your child is defined as vulnerable then please email covid19schools@halton.gov.uk , if you are unable to e-mail please telephone 0151 511 6890 with your contact details, address, the name of the school that is closed and the reason why you require a child care setting.

Information for parents and carers about the closure of schools and other educational settings following the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

Guidance for schools, colleges and local authorities on maintaining educational provision

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Finally, I would once again like to take this opportunity to thank you wholeheartedly for your understanding and ongoing support in helping us to manage this unprecedented situation.

Yours sincerely

Mil Vasic
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