

Viking Academy Trust

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Chilton Primary School
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Dear Viking Parents/Carers

I would like to thank all members of our Viking community for the overwhelmingly positive response to the unprecedented situation that has affected us all over the last few weeks. Understandably, parents and staff alike are facing enormous pressures and want to do their very best for their loved ones – to keep them safe and in good health.

I want to be able to share with you the information we have as school leaders, in the hope that it provides clarity and answers to the many questions you must have at this time. I need to be honest and say there still remains a few unanswered questions – but where this is this case, I will explain what we intend to do at present – and will continue to review on a daily basis.

At this time, the most pressing question to answer for you – to give you the clarification very much needed – is in response to the government's announcement on Wednesday that all schools in the UK will close on Friday 20th March.

Will the Viking Academy Trust schools close today?

Chilton Primary School, Ramsgate Arts Primary and Upton Junior will close their doors at 6pm this evening to 'the majority of children and families'.

We have a statutory responsibility to follow the government's decision, which has been taken following medical and scientific advice as to the best course of action to limit the spread of the virus.

What does 'closed for the majority of children...' mean?

Government advice for parents is... **'parents should keep their children at home, wherever possible and that they've asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.'**

What will my child's education continue if they are not in school?

Your child's Head of School will communicate with families the organisation for Home Learning that has been arranged as of Monday 23rd March. We will also share guidance for establishing 'routines' at home as well as links for parents to access a wealth of materials beyond academic learning e.g. for the whole family to keep mentally and physically healthy at a time of increased anxiety.

MCAS, our school websites and social media platforms will be the main platforms we utilise to communicate with our families.

Key Worker Guidance: (the government are now using the term 'critical' worker)

Information regarding who classifies as a 'key/critical worker' has been released by the government this morning.

'One Childhood, One Chance'



Chilton Primary School, Ramsgate Arts Primary School and Upton Junior School are operated by Viking Academy Trust which is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with company number 09449979. The Registered Office is at Chilton Primary School, Chilton Lane, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 0LQ. Viking Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Will our schools be open to provide childcare for children of 'Key/Critical Workers'?

All three Viking schools will be open on Monday 23rd March until the end of this term (1st April) to provide childcare for the children of frontline 'key/critical workers'.

Risk assessments will be taken daily to ensure staffing levels can meet the number of children on site and decisions will be taken and communicated to families who are using school to provide childcare at this time of national emergency.

If you or your partner meet the criteria of 'key worker' and you would like your child/ren to attend school on Monday, please complete the link below. (The link is also on our school websites)

<https://app.keysurvey.co.uk/f/1479110/99fd/>

Will all children of 'key/critical workers' be able to attend school?

We are currently organising staffing to make provision for the children. Ideally, we would want to be able to provide childcare for all children of key workers – however – this will depend upon our staffing levels. Therefore, it may be necessary to prioritise availability. If you have applied for the provision, further information will be shared with you directly. (This will be shared by 1pm today)

The government have asked schools to remain open to allow 'vulnerable children' to attend. Which children fall under the category of 'Vulnerable Children':

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

The following information I have taken directly from the government website. It can be accessed in full using this [link](#):

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

I am considered a 'key/critical worker' or have a 'vulnerable child' but I don't want to send my child in to school or childcare, do I have to?

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 do so.**

For vulnerable children, your child's social worker will work with you to assess the best option for your child.

Will our Viking schools be open across the Easter holiday for children of key/critical workers and vulnerable children?

I have to be honest with you and state that the Viking Academy Trust is unable to guarantee provision for childcare across the Easter holiday at this time. Every effort will be made to do so but a decision cannot be made until closer to the time. At this time however, our energy is focused on provision until the end of this term (we are describing this as 'Phase 1 provision')

What will happen for children who receive Free School Meals?

Schools have been asked to provide meals or vouchers for children entitled to free school meals.

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Until 1st April, we will provide a meal for our children. Information regarding distribution will be shared with families directly as we understand those in 'household isolation' will not be able to leave home to collect meals from school.

The government are in the process of creating 'national vouchers'. Once they have shared guidelines we will inform our parents. Please see the link below for further information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/plans-set-out-to-support-pupils-eligible-for-free-school-meals>

Foodbanks in Thanet... Please refer to the Thanet Foodbank information we have shared across this week and will continue to share with you. If you are able to make donations of food/hygiene products but are not able to donate directly to a local foodbank, these items can be dropped in to school and we will distribute on your behalf.

How long will we be closed for?

The government advice states... **'schools will be closed until further notice'**. You will have heard different timelines given but, in all honesty, there isn't an answer at this time.

We only hope we will be back functioning 'as normal' sooner rather than later. Nobody wants to see our children's education disrupted in such a way BUT we must take every measure to keep our loved ones safe and well.

As soon as it is considered safe to OPEN, we can assure you, our school doors will be open wide.

Until such a time, may I once again thank you all for the support and kindness you have shown to each other, to our children, our staff and to the wider community. May you take comfort at this time in the kind acts and generosity of family, friends, colleagues and strangers!

Please continue to follow the advice shared by the NHS.

Take care and I look forward to welcoming the entire Viking community back together as soon as possible.

Warmest wishes



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