



19th March 2020

Dear Carers and Parents,

I am writing to you about our school's closure following the speeches last night from Boris Johnson and Gavin Williamson that I am sure will have caused concern and confusion for you and your young person.

The Avenue School will remain closed for the foreseeable future. This decision will be reviewed again at the end of the Easter holidays. We would like to reiterate that the wellbeing of all our learners is always at the heart of what we do and this decision has not been made lightly. Conversations have taken place with our Leadership Team, Chair of Governors, and the Local Authority at Reading Borough Council. I have also discussed last night's announcement with the other Headteachers who form part of The BASS Group (Addington, Arbour Vale, Brookfields, Manor Green, The Avenue and The Castle) before making this difficult decision.

The welfare and safety of your young person is always our primary focus. Your young person/s attends The Avenue School because their primary need is their learning disability. In addition, many of our pupils have additional health care needs. The government is advising all those at, *'increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures.'* Your young person falls into this category. *They must avoid social contact for 12 weeks as from Monday next week. The categories are being updated by Public Health England regarding some of the medical conditions that fall within this.*

Currently, we do not have enough colleagues in school to operate safely, this is the key factor in why we are remaining closed, and we would not be reviewing this decision until after Easter due to the 14-day self-isolation advice from the government.

We are currently in discussions with the local authority about how we can best support our most vulnerable pupils. In addition, all parents will receive weekly contact from class teachers either by email or phone call.

Parents / carers of children who are entitled to free school meals have already been contacted regarding our offer to continue providing a weekly lunch box service.

Some of our families, who receive additional agency support, will be contacted by members of our Safeguarding Team, detailing the support we will be providing during this period.

We thank you for your ongoing support and understanding at this unprecedented time.

Kind regards,

Symon Cooke Head teacher

SPECIAL NEEDS ACADEMY

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