



MacIntyre Academies
Quest Academy

Monday 23rd March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Over the weekend the government issued further guidance around our provision and the measures to reduce our school provision as much as possible in response to the Coronavirus outbreak.

We have been instructed to undertake risk assessments for our learners to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home.

We have already communicated with the Local Authority about this and a member of our Family Footings Team will ring you later on today.

We are also reviewing those children with a parent or carer who is listed on the [government's critical worker list](#) who should be considered for a school place so long as their job cannot be done from home. **The guidance is that every child who can be safely cared for at home should be, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.**

I have attached some of the key information from this source below and you can read the full guidance here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing>

Please continue to stay in touch with us and we will keep you updated also.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Nicola Wells
Principal
Quest Academy

Putting children and families *first*



QUEST ACADEMY

Anderson Avenue, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV22 5PE

Telephone: 01788 593 112

Email: quest.office@macintyreacademies.org Website: www.thequestacademy.org



MacIntyre Academies
Quest Academy

Government Guidance on Vulnerable Children and Young People

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

Why are these children being prioritised?

We know that some families need more support than others and that education is an important protective factor for children receiving support from a social worker. We want to prioritise supporting those most in need at this difficult time.

Is it guaranteed that children will attend their usual school?

Local authorities will work with trusts and schools to ensure that schools are kept open, but in some cases this will not be possible. Local authorities and schools will make the most appropriate arrangements and talk to parents about this. It may not always be possible for children to attend their usual school in order to ensure that children and staff are kept safe.

If children are accessing schools that are not local, will transport be provided?

Where children are receiving support from a social worker, we would expect the local authority to review transport arrangements and make appropriate provision for children to reach school safely. We will work closely with local authorities to put the necessary arrangements in place to support children.

Do vulnerable children have to continue to go to school?

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend school, as long as it is safe for them to do so. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to school, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and school should explore the reasons for this, directly with the parent, and help to resolve any concerns or difficulties wherever possible.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting the virus, the school or social worker should talk through these anxieties with the parent following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Providers may also want to consider how to encourage children and young people to attend provision. Social workers will remain in contact with vulnerable children and families, including remotely if needed.

Putting children and families *first*



QUEST ACADEMY

Anderson Avenue, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV22 5PE

Telephone: 01788 593 112

Email: quest.office@macintyreacademies.org Website: www.thequestacademy.org



MacIntyre Academies
Quest Academy

What about additional pressure on families with children at home – will that increase risk?

It is right that we prioritise which children will continue to attend in light of both their specific circumstances, and so that critical workers can continue their vital work and that key services can continue to operate. Where children are at risk, they should be referred to children's social care. Vulnerable children who already have a social worker will still be visited and/or monitored as frequently as possible and are eligible for a school place.

What about children's homes and other settings?

Children's homes will remain open – we are talking to local authorities to ensure that they have the necessary workforce to remain open to deliver the vital protection they provide for vulnerable children.

Do all children and young people with an EHC plan need to continue at school?

Schools, colleges, other training providers and local authorities will need to consider the needs of all children and young people with an EHC plan, alongside the views of their parents, and make a risk assessment for each child or young person. They will need to consider a number of different risks to each individual, including:

- the potential health risks to the individual from COVID-19, bearing in mind any underlying health conditions. This must be on an individual basis with advice from an appropriate health professional where required
- the risk to the individual if some or all elements of their EHC plan cannot be delivered at all, and the risk if they cannot be delivered in the normal manner or in the usual setting
- the ability of the individual's parents or home to ensure their health and care needs can be met safely
- the potential impact to the individual's wellbeing of changes to routine or the way in which provision is delivered

We expect most children will fall into the following categories:

- children and young people who would be at significant risk if their education, health and care provision and placement did not continue, namely those who could not safely be supported at home. This may include those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, and those receiving significant levels of personal care support. Local authorities will need to work with the individual's educational setting – especially residential special schools and colleges – as well as local health partners, to ensure they are able to remain open wherever possible. This may mean deploying staff from other schools, to keep staffing ratios safe
- children and young people whose needs can be met at home, namely those who are not receiving personal care from their educational setting, or whose limited need for personal care can be met in their family home. As part of the government's emergency powers, we will modify the statutory duties on local

Putting children and families **first**



QUEST ACADEMY

Anderson Avenue, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV22 5PE

Telephone: 01788 593 112

Email: quest.office@macintyreacademies.org Website: www.thequestacademy.org



MacIntyre Academies Quest Academy

authorities to maintain the precise provision in EHC plans and will expect educational settings and local authorities to use their reasonable endeavours to support these children and their families

Where a local authority is unable to put in place stated provision, they will need to use their reasonable endeavours to do this, but won't be penalised for failing to meet the existing duty in the 2014 Act.

Will my child's special school stay open?

We are recommending that all residential special schools and colleges conduct a risk assessment both for the institution and for individual pupils/students to identify how self-isolation measures should be enacted, if needed. This will involve close working with local authorities, the local Public Health England health protection team, the clinical commissioning group and, where appropriate, the child's parents or carers.

This means that case-by-case, closures may apply if the workforce can be deployed elsewhere more efficiently to ensure children are safe and their needs are met.

Do special schools need to open over the Easter holidays?

Where possible, we would encourage settings to look after critical workers' children and vulnerable children throughout the Easter holidays. Local authorities will need to ensure, as usual, that provision continues to be available to meet education, health and care needs. Following discussion with schools, this may involve some special schools and colleges continuing to offer some or all of their provision over the Easter holidays.

What if there are not enough staff in educational settings due to COVID-19?

Local authorities will need to work closely with educational settings – and in particular special schools and other specialist provision – to ensure sufficient provision is available across the local area. Local authorities and educational settings may need to redeploy staff (whether teachers, support staff or other critical workers) to ensure specialist schools and colleges have sufficient workforce to operate safely, and may need to do this across the usual boundaries of maintained, academy, college or other status to ensure the right staff are in the right settings.

Putting children and families *first*



QUEST ACADEMY

Anderson Avenue, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV22 5PE

Telephone: 01788 593 112

Email: quest.office@macintyreacademies.org Website: www.thequestacademy.org