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**Head of School: Diane Finney**

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**Head of School: Joan Wright**

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will be aware schools across England have been instructed to close to the majority of children as a result of the measures being taken to tackle the spread of the coronavirus. This comes into effect after Friday 20th March. Schools have been told to remain open for the children of key workers and for vulnerable pupils. As all children within Special Schools are defined as vulnerable we have sought further guidance as with staffing absences increasing we will not be able to remain open for all pupils and students. We are advised that we are to make a professional judgement on which children we are open to:

*“Special schools are advised to make case by case basis assessments of the health and safeguarding considerations of pupils and students on an education, health and care (EHC) plan. For some, they will be safer in an education provision. For others, they will be safer at home.”*

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

This is an unenviable decision to make as the variety of factors that make a child vulnerable are incomparable. However, in line with other special schools we have made that decision based on those families that most need our support.

**You will receive a text message informing you as to whether your son or daughter can attend from Monday. The latest advice from the Government is that if it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be. The decision to send your son or daughter to school still lies with you as parents and carers. Whilst we will maintain the high levels of safety we always have, we cannot make any guarantees or accurate judgement about the level of risk. Children will be travelling on transport with others, in classrooms with others, sharing resources and facilities with others. It would be advisable for any child or young person with any health condition that puts them at possibly greater risk to not attend school. This includes children and young people with asthma.**

You will also have received a text message asking parents who are key workers to contact the school. The list of key workers can be found at:

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

Like many schools we are facing an ongoing challenge in terms of staff absence. Many schools despite the direction to open to limited numbers of children will have to close because of the risks when they do not have enough staff. One way we may try to manage this risk is to move our pupils and students from Springfield and the Meadows onto one site. This will mean it is more likely we can remain open even when staff absence increases.

Our intention would be to move all necessary resources and provision to the Meadows site at the time that is right to do so. We will keep the parents and carers of Springfield pupils updated as to when this decision is taken.

Should staffing absence force us into a position where children’s safety is at risk our plan is to close parts of the school in stages.

Given the current situations and pressures we are facing the school office emails will NOT be monitored for parental communications. It is vital that we have up to date contact information for all parents and carers so we would ask that anyone who may have changed their phone number recently to inform the school. It will also be essential that all parents and carers of those children still in school from Monday make themselves as available as possible during the school day should we need to contact them in an emergency.

For those children and young people who do not attend school we still aim to maintain some level of education, support and contact whilst:

* Our Family Support team will be available during normal school hours via email to respond to any appropriate concerns.

[kieron.edridge@themeadows.manorhall.academy](mailto:kieron.edridge@themeadows.manorhall.academy)

[julie.roberts@themeadows.manorhall.academy](mailto:julie.roberts@themeadows.manorhall.academy)

* If you feel you require a higher level of support during the school closure please get in touch with Sarah Rubanski.
* If you have any concerns regarding Safeguarding please email our Designated Safeguarding Lead – Sarah Rubanski [s.rubanski@springfield.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:s.rubanski@springfield.staffs.sch.uk)
* If you have any concerns regarding Health Issues not related to coronavirus please email [Specialschools.staffs@nhs.net](mailto:Specialschools.staffs@nhs.net)
* Teachers will be sending physical packs home with work for the students to complete. We have also prepared a number of links to online resources and activities on the school website. The links can be found on the information tab under useful websites.
* We will endeavour to put important information and items onto our website so please keep checking.
* We will provide any further information regarding the school via our website and txt message service.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to all the staff in both schools at this time. I have always been proud and often shocked by the levels of commitment and dedication staff show to the pupils and young people at both schools but what I have observed over the last few days has been truly inspiring. It gives me reassurance and hope that we will overcome the challenges we currently face.

We are entering a worrying and uncertain time and we are unable to tell you when things may return to some sort of normality. All we can do is to wish you and all your family and friends all the very best and hope that you all remain healthy and safe.

Kind regards

Christopher Best

Executive Headteacher

Diane Finney

Head of School Springfield

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Joan Wright

Head of School The Meadows

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