

'...those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.' Isaiah 40:31



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20th March 2020.

Mrs Annie Wiles
CEO
Rev John Richardson
Chair of Trustees
Aquila, The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are in unprecedented and very challenging times and have a duty of care to keep our pupils, staff and families safe. Our overarching advice to schools and families is to follow official guidance and to do their utmost to reduce the risk of the virus which will otherwise cause unnecessary deaths.

The Government is asking schools to open to provide care for children of key workers and vulnerable children. **This is not a statutory requirement – schools are being asked to help as part of a national response.** All our schools are very happy to play their role in this time of crisis but we must also ensure that our staff and their families are also safe.

The announcement by the government about school closures is about social distancing and the most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. If it is safe for your children to stay at home, they should. This will limit the spread of the virus.

That is why the government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open **only** for those children who **absolutely need** to attend.

It is important to underline that our schools remain safe places for children. But the fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in the school building, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society.

Our schools are, therefore, being asked to continue to provide care for a **limited number** of children - children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and **cannot be safely cared for at home.**

Your school will have shared with you the list of workers whose role is critical to the COVID-19 response but we believe that many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept safely at home. If you believe that you fall within one of the critical categories, you should confirm with your employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, your specific role is necessary for the continuation of an essential public service. Your school may ask you to provide proof and we consider they are right to do so.

If any of our schools have to close for any reason, such as lack of staff/a virus outbreak then please **contact the local authority**, who will seek to redirect you to a local school that your child, or children, can attend.

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Please be assured that our schools are working in the best interests of children, the staff and the wider community.

With kind regards,



Mrs Annie Wiles
CEO



Rev John Richardson
Chair of Trustees