

Media Release

Date: 20 March 2020 (updated on 22 March 2020)

COVID-19: critical worker list released following decision to temporarily pause education

Children of critical workers will be able to attend their usual schools, colleges and Early Years Providers (pre-schools, nurseries and child-minders) for the next four weeks until the end of the planned Easter holiday period.

Children and Young people with special educational needs who usually attend SEND Schools will also be able to attend their schools, if parents wish to send them, this includes Le Rondin, Le Murier, Les Voies and additional needs bases. Guernsey College of Further Education will be working with parents of students with special educational needs to ensure that they are supported. These measures will be in place until the scheduled Easter holidays begin. The Education Office is currently investigating the possibility of access to holiday provision for these students who have parents identified as key workers.

All students of parents not defined as critical workers will be required to stay at home. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category, such as grandparents, friends or family members with underlying conditions. Parents should also ensure that children observe the same social distancing principles as adults.

For children to continue to attend school, college or early years during this period BOTH parents (whether they are living together or apart) MUST be critical workers. The only exception is where one parent is a nurse, doctor, other key health or care worker, teaching staff, or staff essential to supporting the States of Guernsey's response to COVID-19, whose child(ren) will be able to attend school, college or early years even if the other parent does not fall into a critical worker category.

Vital coursework and learning material can and will be provided online for Secondary school students. Education staff are working on systems to enable coursework to be set while children are away from school. Further work is continuing and future announcements will be made when virtual classrooms can be established should the schools need to be closed for longer.

Schools will continue to support those students whose exams are currently going ahead.

These arrangements follow the decision yesterday (Thursday 19th March) by the Director of Public Health. The decision is enforceable by law so private providers must comply.

Education staff will continue to work in their present school or college as directed by their headteacher from Monday 23rd March, unless they have received medical guidance telling them not to do so, until the end of term. Work is ongoing to collaborate with staff on provision for the children of key workers during the Easter holidays.

For the purposes of this decision by the Director of Public Health, critical workers are defined as:

Private sector

- Workers **ESSENTIAL** to the functioning of any activity necessary to:
 - Ensure the continuing supply and accessibility of food and other essential goods including
 - Supermarkets and grocery stores
 - Air and sea freight transport
 - Stevedores and other necessary port management activities
 - Freight operators
 - Ensuring continuing health and community care services including
 - GP surgeries/medical practices
 - Pharmacies
 - Residential and nursing homes
 - Private and third sector agencies providing care services in a home or other setting (including the care of animals)
 - Those essential to law and order
 - Judiciary Services
 - Advocates
 - Those providing private school services and daytime childcare
 - Private primary and secondary schools
 - Nurseries and day-care services
 - Maintain critical national infrastructure (essential staff)
 - Utilities (water, electricity, gas, oil, post)
 - Telecoms providers (essential staff required to deliver mobile and fixed line telecommunication services)
 - Maintain public transport
 - Bus operators and school transport providers
 - Public service broadcasters and other mainstream news media

Private sector employers falling within the above categories should determine which roles are essential to the ability to maintain critical services.

Public service

- Workers **ESSENTIAL** to the functioning of:
 - Health and Social Care
 - Education

- Emergency Services (Law Enforcement, Ambulance, Fire and Coastguard)
- Prison
- Law Officers
- States Works
- Guernsey Waste
- Ports
- Regulatory roles directly related to financial stability and banking supervision
- Treasury
- Social Security
- Key staff from services as defined by the States Chief Executive

School/College leaders will also invite students to attend if they have specific circumstances of need that the school/college is aware of (for example, looked-after children).

Deputy Gavin St Pier, Chair of the Civil Contingencies Authority, said:

‘We believe that between 10% and 15% of children would continue attending schools, colleges and early years providers during this temporary pause to education.

‘I remain hopeful that the decision to take this action is not the beginning of a longer term closure of education providers, but we simply do not know what tomorrow will bring as we continue to assess the risks and take decisive action to protect our community.

‘I want to put on record my thanks to the many dedicated education staff whose efforts cannot be underestimated as we seek to provide childcare provision for other key workers during this period.’

Ends

Notes to Media

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