Friday 20th March

**Information relating to COVID-19 and school closures**

Dear Parents and Carers

The Don Valley Pyramid of schools (Sunnyfields Primary School, Castle Hills Primary School, Toll Bar Primary School, Our Lady’s Catholic Primary School, Bentley New Village Primary School, Kirkby Avenue Primary School, Bentley High Street Primary School and Arksey Primary School) have agreed a consistent application of the Government guidance and are working together to ensure common systems and protocols.

Guidance states that, ***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 it (and there is no viable alternative).*** This is to provide non-educational child care.

As schools, we have been directed to close to a majority of pupils to reduce the spread of COVID-19, this means that schools have a limited capacity to accommodate children who are accessing emergency childcare, in order to prevent the spread of the virus. As such, the ***school will close today at 3.30pm to all children other than those who have been contacted directly and invited to return.***

We are so sorry that the school has been forced to close but the welfare of the community is paramount and we all have a role to play in keeping ourselves and one-another safe. This means staying at home and away from others as much as possible.

If you think that you may qualify for childcare as you are a Government defined Key-Worker, then you must contact the school directly and apply for a place by completing the necessary form. Forms are available from the office. The school has limited number of places for children of Key Workers and once in receipt of your form, we will contact you directly if we are able to offer you a place.

**YOU MUST NOT ARRIVE WITH YOUR CHILD/REN ON MONDAY IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY BEEN OFFERED A CHILDCARE PLACE BY THE SCHOOL DIRECTLY.**

It would be prudent to make alternative arrangements for the first part of next week to allow the school time to process your application and allocate places. Places will be allocated according to a hierarchical system of critical services. You should expect to provide evidence of your essential role as a Key Worker, along with evidence that you have no other alternatives to child care and that your employer has included you as part of their COVID-19 contingency plan. If we are unable to offer you a place, then we will forward your request to the Local Authority for further consideration.

We are working hard to provide meals for those children who are in receipt of free school meals. This does not mean all children under the age of 7 years old, but those families who qualify due to low income. If you are not sure if you qualify, then please contact the school. The school will prepare a packed lunch that children entitled to free school meals can collect daily. If you are self-isolating, then you should arrange for a friend or non-household member to collect the lunch on your behalf. Lunches will be available from 11.30 to 1.30pm daily.

The school will still be open for enquiries and phone calls - so if there is anything we can help you with then please get in touch. We also have a Facebook page and a Twitter page that will provide up to date information for you to access. The Facebook page is purely for information and is NOT a means to contact the school. Contact will be phone or via email at [admin@newvillage.doncaster.sch.uk](mailto:admin@newvillage.doncaster.sch.uk). Can I remind you that the Facebook page is to help and support the community and comments are not necessary. We do not want this page to become a means of complaint or unkind comments!

And finally…. the national picture is changing rapidly. We are responding as quickly as we are able and ask for your continued patience. We do not know how long we will be closed for, or what is going to happen in the near future, but we do know that we will miss you all very much and are wishing you continued good health.

Stay safe and look after one another and we will see you all soon

Best Wishes

Mrs K McKechnie and the staff of Bentley New Village School