

## EDUCATION, LEISURE & HOUSING

**Executive Director:** James Wylie  
Council Offices, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NY

Tel: (01856) 873535  
Fax: (01856) 876327

Website: [www.orkney.gov.uk](http://www.orkney.gov.uk)  
Email: [education.leisure@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:education.leisure@orkney.gov.uk)



JW/AJD

20 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

We received guidance this afternoon from the Deputy First Minister on the Scottish Government's decision to close schools and nurseries in response to the escalating Covid-19 outbreak.

All schools, local authority early learning and childcare settings and the Papdale Halls of Residence will close to children and young people from 5pm on Friday 20 March.

Work is underway however to put provision in place for:

- The children of key workers – allowing parents and carers to play their part in the national response to Covid-19.
- S4 – S6 pupils, to ensure they can complete course work for national qualifications.
- Vulnerable children.

The Scottish Government has asked us to do this by the end of next week. We will provide an update on progress as soon as we can.

We are working with partner organisations to determine the key workers who will require childcare provision for children and young people under the age of 16.

An application form for key workers is available on the Council website here. This provides detailed information about key worker categories. We would encourage parents to complete this as a matter of urgency so we can establish provision as soon as possible.

We are also exploring the options to support vulnerable children, including continued provision of free school meals.

We realise school and nursery closures will cause enormous disruption for local families, carers, businesses and public services. The Deputy First Minister has described the steps he has asked us to take as exceptional and a measure of the extraordinary challenges we all face.

I thank you all for the positivity you have shown towards school staff who are working at pace and under extreme pressure.

Yours sincerely

James Wylie  
Executive Director