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Yr Highway
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LETTER 2

18 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carers

No sooner than we emailed out my previous letter to you, that I received official communication from the Welsh Government that all schools in Wales will close to pupils from Monday. This news was simultaneously breaking across national media outlets.

Despite the latest news, it is my intention that the school will remain open until 3.10p.m. on Friday for all year groups. This will give all stakeholders a smoother end to the week with an opportunity to better prepare for early school closure for the Easter holidays from Monday, 23 March 2020. Our advice remains that should pupils be symptomatic of Coronavirus they should not attend school over the next two days. Likewise if you have concerns about the health vulnerabilities of your child, I shall be happy to authorise their absence. Please see my previous letters for clarification in this regard.

I copy the information below from the Education Minister, Kirsty Williams AM, for information.

"Today, I can announce we are bringing forward the Easter break for schools in Wales. Schools across Wales will close for statutory provision of education at the latest on 20 March 2020.

I have been clear up to now that the continuity of education and the wellbeing of our learners has been at the heart of my decision making. This will always be the case.

From next week, schools will have a new purpose. They will help support those most in need, including people involved in the immediate response to the coronavirus outbreak. I am working with my colleagues in the Cabinet, with government officials and our partners in local government to develop and finalise these plans.

The key areas we are looking at are supporting and safeguarding the vulnerable and ensuring continuity of learning. We are looking in detail at how we can support and safeguard all those who benefit from free school meals and children with additional learning needs. I will make sure you are kept up-to-date.

While this will apply to schools, childcare settings are expected to remain open until we have definitive advice from the Chief Medical Officer and from Public Health Wales that any closures are required. Parents can, and should, speak with their usual childcare providers if they need care over the Easter holidays.

I have discussed my intentions with the Leader of the Welsh Local Government Association, Andrew Morgan, who reflects the views of local authorities. Some school staff will likely have an important role to play in this. We are working closely with our key stakeholders to look at what this will look like for both education and childcare settings, including Flying Start. This position will of course evolve over the coming days and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

One of the critical decisions that we will seek to clarify with urgency is that of the forthcoming examinations. I am also working with Qualifications Wales and the WJEC about this year's exam series. In line with all education ministers across the UK, I will be making a further announcement shortly.

From the outset, the decisions being taken have been focused on public health advice, and it is right that these science-based recommendations are front and centre of the decisions being made.

The announcement I am making today will help ensure an orderly closure for schools so that they have the time to prepare. However, I am conscious that the SAGE Committee and COBR meet this afternoon, and I will of course be listening closely to see if advice changes and any further urgent decisions about school closures are needed.

Today's decision will help ensure an orderly closure, so schools have time to prepare ahead of the early break.

My main message for everyone is to stay safe and stay well. We will work together and we will face this outbreak together.

I will of course continue to keep you updated."

As soon as I receive further information about a return to normal, or indeed regarding arrangements for examinations, I shall pass that information on. It is imperative that the school holds the most up-to-date contact details for all families over the next few weeks. Please telephone the office in the coming days if you have any updates to make to your contact details.

With very best wishes to you and your families.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Budgen', written in a cursive style.

Mr. S. Budgen
Headteacher