



To all Headteachers

**Children, Young People and
Education Directorate**

Sessions House
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Date: 23rd November 2020

Dear Colleague

I would like to reiterate how incredibly grateful I am for all you and your colleagues are doing to ensure there is continuity of education for all the children and young people in Kent. I have a number of new updates for you that I hope you will find helpful.

Media Enquiries

Local media in Kent are keen to report on how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting people in the county and this includes the effect it has on schools. Therefore, if you have to partially or fully close your school as a result of COVID-19 cases you may be approached by a journalist and asked to provide a statement for their story.

Appended to this letter are two template statements that have been developed by Kent County Council's press office, which can be used by any school that would find them helpful. They are designed to be used as a starting point and schools are free to make changes or add to them as they see fit.

As I'm sure you appreciate, the press officers, like many people at the moment, are under significant pressure dealing with media enquiries around COVID-19 whilst continuing to support schools with communications. So, if you have been approached by a journalist and are able to email them your completed statement rather than asking a press officer to do it, I would be very grateful. However, if you do require additional support from KCC's press office, you can contact Suz Elvey on 03000 417020 or 07738 755491 or suz.elvey@kent.gov.uk. If you require **urgent** support from the press office outside of normal working hours you can find details of the on call duty press officer on this link: <https://kccmediahub.net/about>

If your school normally handles its own media enquiries and is happy to continue doing so, then please do not feel under any obligation to make use of these templates or the press office.

Changes to the Coronavirus Testing Contact Centre – Ordering Test Kits

The Department for Health and Social Care has made us aware that they have made a change to the 'option list' when calling 119, the Test & Trace helpdesk. This is intended to make the process quicker and clearer for schools to reach the school support team to order more testing kits for your setting. After selecting whether you are calling from England or Wales, press '1' for calling from an organisation who receives test kits. That will get you straight through to the school support team.

The DHSC has also launched a survey for schools to share their experience of the testing service. Please visit [here](#).

Schools Funding Consultation: Reminder and Extension

Many thanks to all who have responded to the Schools Funding consultation so far. I appreciate the timing of this consultation is not ideal, but we are required by Government to consult on changes to our Local Funding Formula which is used to calculate your annual School budget. This consultation contains a number of proposals which will affect the amount of funding your school receives next year.

Please note, the deadline to respond to the Schools Funding consultation has been extended to Thursday 27th November. I encourage all maintained schools, academies and free schools in the area covered by Kent County Council to respond to this consultation.

You can access all of the consultation documentation and submit your response online at www.kent.gov.uk/schoolfundingconsultation.

If you have any questions about the consultation, please email your query to schoolfunding@kent.gov.uk.

Impact of The Exit Cap on Redundancy and Efficiency Exits

The Local Government Association has released information and guides for the employer to follow when dealing with employees in the Local Government Pension Scheme, aged over 55, and leaving due to redundancy or efficiency. Details can be found on the [Kelsi LGPS page](#) and are effective from the **4 November 2020**.

Thank you again for your efforts as these are hugely appreciated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Dunkley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'y'.

Matt Dunkley CBE
Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Education

Template Press Statements

FULL CLOSURE:

Head teacher X said: “Today, after consulting with Public Health England, the Department for Education and Kent County Council, I made the difficult decision to close the school after we were required to send (more than half of our pupils etc) home to self-isolate. Details of groups/bubbles sent home and when.

“In total, more than X students out of X as well as X members of staff had already been asked to self-isolate by DATE.

“For the safety and well-being of the whole school community we made the decision to close the school until DATE. Any deep cleaning etc being done during that time for additional safety?”

“I would like to stress this will not be a holiday for pupils or staff. Teachers will provide learning via Google Classroom etc and staff will support pupils with learning remotely.

“I would like to thank my staff, our parents and carers and of course our pupils for their support and understanding. I look forward to welcoming everyone back to school later in the month/DATE etc when we will all continue to follow PHE guidance in terms of social distancing, handwashing and cleaning to minimise the spread of the virus and ensure we can all continue to learn and work in a safe environment.”

PART/BUBBLE CLOSURE:

Head teacher X said: “Unfortunately, we have had a confirmed case of COVID-19 within our Year X bubble. My colleagues and I are following Public Health England (PHE) guidance to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone within the school community and as a result X pupils and X members of staff will be self-isolating at home until DATE. Home learning will be provided via Google Classroom etc and staff will support pupils with their learning remotely.

“The rest of the school remains open with staff and pupils continuing to follow PHE guidance in terms of social distancing, handwashing and cleaning to minimise the spread of the virus and ensure everyone can continue to learn and work in a safe environment.

“I would like to thank the staff, our parents and carers and our pupils for their support and understanding at this difficult time.”