



Ballykeel Primary School & Nursery Unit

22 Crebilly Road, Ballymena BT42 4DN
Tel: 028 2565 3902 Fax: 028 2564 5887
Email: info@ballykeelps.ballymena.ni.sch.uk
Website: www.ballykeelps.org.uk



KEY WORKER UPDATE

23/03/20

Dear Parent,

On Friday 20th March I sent correspondence to you regarding the school's closure along with its re-opening on Monday 23rd March for the children of key workers. In the absence of any advice or correspondence from the Department of Education (DE), it was decided by ourselves and most NI schools that only children with both parents as key workers would be considered for admission. Given the volume of parents who qualify under the banner of 'key worker' this decision was based on the premise that it would be totally impractical and not in anyone's health interest to reassemble next week with a significant percentage of children still in attendance. If this were to happen we could not deliver safe compliance to social distancing which is now a priority.

Having issued my letter to you on Friday afternoon, I eventually received an email from DE at nearly 8:00 the same evening. In their correspondence the DE have asked schools to now consider requests for children to attend school where one parent is a key worker.

As a school, the staff of Ballykeel Primary School and Nursery Unit are determined and extremely willing to do what we can, in a way that is safe for pupils and staff, to help sustain the continued operation of vital services that are needed to keep society functioning. Consequently, on Monday 23rd we have been open to children whose both parents are key workers. We will also now be taking telephone applications for admissions where one parent of a child is a key worker. This process will involve giving details of your employment including your exact role, working hours etc. This information is necessary as the school may not be able to safely accommodate all children who seek admission and will therefore have to prioritise. At this juncture, priority will be given to the children of doctors, nurses and NHS staff.

I would ask you to consider the following points carefully:

- The Minister of Education has stipulated that, due to social distancing and risk, key workers' children **Should Only Be Sent To School As A Last Resort and Where There Is No Other Option Available To Them.**
- Please exhaust all other possibilities before you consider sending your child.
- The fewer children in an educational setting, the lower the risk that the virus can spread.
- The safest place for children is in their own homes.
- For those needing to attend please note that school staff will be performing child care duties, rather than teaching as not all teachers are currently available to teach specific year groups and teachers.

I would like to conclude by reiterating our desire and willingness to provide a service to our parents. These are difficult and challenging times for us all, but by working together we can play a small part in keeping our vital services operating as normally as is possible. If you have no other option available to you, please telephone the school on 02825653902 or 02825650296 by 4:00 today.

Yours sincerely,

S. Sheeran