

Tuesday, 2 April 2020

Schools stay open in Easter Holidays for critical workers

The Education Minister has announced that schools and nurseries will remain open during the Easter holidays to support childcare for critical workers and some vulnerable children.

Headteachers, their staff and others have volunteered to ensure that all schools remain open to accommodate the children of critical workers, from both inside and outside of the Government, and vulnerable children.

In a statement the Education Minister, Senator Tracey Vallois, said: "I am pleased to confirm that we are in a position to offer childcare to the children of critical workers and some of our vulnerable children over the Easter Holidays.

"I am enormously grateful to our headteachers and their staff who have volunteered to work over this period and support their fellow critical worker colleagues and their children. Also, I extend my sincere thanks to other colleagues across Government - notably staff from the Music Service, Highlands College, youth workers and from our sports venues who, along with staff from Jersey Sport, will provide supplementary capacity and expertise in planning and delivering holiday activities.

"To make the transition into the holidays as smooth as possible we have made unique arrangements for schools to remain open during this period to the small number of children that have been attending over these last few days. While the venues are the same, the activities will be different to reflect the holiday period.

"Similarly many nurseries will either open during this period or continue to provide care to the small group of children permitted to attend during this period of 'stay at home' restrictions.

"This provision continues to be offered as a last resort to a limited number of parents and carers who are engaged in delivering essential services and are unable to make any alternative arrangements for childcare. Schools and nurseries will not open over the

Easter weekend when it is hoped, in spite of this situation, some family time may be afforded to all.

"In the light of this announcement, over the next couple of days, we will be contacting parents who have expressed a need for childcare over the holiday period confirming arrangements.

"I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all of our schools, nurseries and childminders and the Department who have supported the Government to enable essential services to continue across our Island. This is an unprecedented time for us all.

"The Department and its Childcare and Early Years' Service have worked really hard with schools, nurseries and childminders who have opened their doors to accommodate the children of critical workers and our vulnerable children.

"A huge amount of work has gone into ensuring that nurseries are eligible for the co-funded payroll scheme, which helps businesses to retain their employees and means that they can resume normal business activity as soon as possible once restrictions are eased.

"We will continue to work closely with all of our nurseries and childminders to ensure that the financial support available through the co-funded payroll scheme allows them to continue to retain their employees and to deliver this vital service for the community of Jersey."

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Notes to Editors

1. For further information, please contact the press office on 01534 440430 or pressoffice@gov.je

The wider list of critical workers is available on <https://www.gov.je/Health/Coronavirus/Pages/CriticalWorkersAndChildcare.aspx> including an online form for applications.

2. If any organisation believes it undertakes critical work but is not listed and has staff who will need to be exempted from the 'Stay At Home April' order at any time, they are asked to contact 1GCT@gov.je to be considered.