

Northamptonshire Special School Heads Group

As you will be aware, due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, we are in unprecedented times.

To control the spread of the virus, the government has announced that all schools will shut; apart from those that support children and young people with Education Health and Care plans (EHC plans), children who are considered vulnerable, or those children whose parents are key workers.

The special schools in Northamptonshire support some of the most vulnerable young people in our communities, all of whom have EHC plans, and so we are committed to do everything in our power to be able to offer an ongoing provision for our children and young people; and are committed to working together to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all children and staff.

We are in the position of being asked to keep our school opens however as Gavin Williamson, the Secretary of State for Education, stated:

“Special schools are advised to make assessment on a case by case basis of the health and safeguarding considerations of pupils on a EHCP. For some, they will be safer in an education provision. For others, they will be safer at home. The Secretary of State trusts leaders to make these decisions.”

Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education

Schools have also had additional duties discharged to us to support certain pupils staying at home which will have a significant drain on staff and time resources.

To keep Northamptonshire Special Schools open for their full cohorts will not be feasible, realistic or safe at this time so we are devising a strategy that will enable us to meet our social responsibility to support children of key workers and our most vulnerable.

This will not be an academic provision but will mirror a child care provision.

In the days and weeks to come there will undoubtedly be some difficult decisions that school leaders will need to make to be able to keep your child’s school open and safe. Please rest assured that the headteachers of the special schools in Northamptonshire are committed to the welfare of your child and their staff, every decision made will be in the interest of your child.

