

22nd May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will be aware, our academies are currently open to small numbers of children of key worker families and our most vulnerable young people. We are currently planning the wider opening of our academies to include more pupils in June. This will be managed at an individualised level and we will increase our numbers very gradually to ensure that we can manage the larger numbers of pupils and staff safely on each site.

Thank you to those who completed our questionnaire. This has helped us to understand how families are feeling about the return to school. About 30% of parents across the Trust completed the questionnaire. Around 60% of you said that you were not ready for your child to return to school, and a further quarter of responses said that it would be good to come back, but there were some worries about being back at school. We understand your concerns and are working hard to reduce identified risks as far as is possible.

Obviously we cannot say that school will be 100% safe. As you know, the risk of transmission of covid19 increases with the number of social contacts. We will find social distancing impossible with some of our young people and this increased contact will result in an increased risk. We are keen to wait until the R rate is lowered in our region and track and trace is fully available before admitting more students. In order to further control this risk we are planning small class bubbles made up of no more than 6 children who will travel together and be taught together by a small staff team during each day. This will ensure that the level of close contact is kept to a minimum. This will be supported by regular handwashing, cleaning and the use of PPE where we feel it is appropriate. Wherever possible we will be using separate outdoor space for different groups.

We will not be able to offer all children a place as this model will restrict the numbers we have in school and we are also working with a reduced staff team. In order to transition students back to school successfully, it will be important that we match student needs with the right people and this will depend on staff availability. Returning to school will be voluntary and provision initially will be for our most vulnerable young people. We will not be asking any children who are in the extremely vulnerable category or the vulnerable category to come in to school. They are still safer at home. This also applies to those children who live with people who are in the extremely clinically vulnerable category. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Our Trustees have met today to review all risk assessments and make a decision around possible dates to begin this increase in numbers. After half term our Head Teachers and leadership teams will be in contact with you to inform you of their plans for wider opening later in June. We hope that you understand the need for careful and considered planning in these circumstances.

Yours Sincerely



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