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**18<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

Dear Parents/Carers

I trust that you are well and coping with the current situation.

The government have announced that providing the Covid-19 infection rate continues to improve, primary schools will be asked to welcome back children currently in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from the week commencing 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020.

In light of this announcement, we have been working with our individual schools to prepare for the potential return of these children.

During this period, The Trust will be:

- Carrying out risk assessments to ensure that the schools are safer working environments for our staff and children,
- Informing parents about how we will be opening our schools and the safety measures we have put into place, and what we expect from you as the parents and carers of our children.
- Continuing to consult with our staff, unions and Local Authority

Across our Trust schools there will be a comprehensive list of measures being put into place to ensure maximum safety of our children, families and staff members. Although many of these procedures will be specific to your individual schools, we feel that it would be both useful and reassuring to you all at this point to make you aware of our Trust approach to the re-opening of our schools.

Please note once again that the opening of our schools on the 1<sup>st</sup> June is fully dependant on government instruction based on the infection rate at that time.

To assist us in preparing for potentially opening on the 1<sup>st</sup> June, **all of our Trust schools will be closed during the Whitsun break (Monday May 25<sup>th</sup> – Friday May 29<sup>th</sup>)**

### **Returning to School**

*We will continue to follow government guidance in the anticipation of opening on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, however, **we will only initially be offering school places for three days each week – Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.** The remainder of the week will be utilised for staff to plan and prepare work for all children both in school and at home. In addition to this, it will allow us the opportunity to carry out a deep clean, hence ensuring the health and welfare of your children.*

***In the first instance from 1<sup>st</sup> of June, we will only be opening school for Year 6 and Year 1 pupils and for children whose parents and carers are key workers or children who are classed as vulnerable. A decision to open our schools for any other year groups will be made after the 1<sup>st</sup> of June as we continue to risk assess the situation. Any developments will be communicated with you throughout this period.***

## **Health and Safety**

Although our schools have been open during the lockdown period for vulnerable children and those whose parents/carers are key workers, there have been areas within our school buildings which have not been used during this time. We will therefore be undertaking an extensive health and safety check of all of our school buildings prior to them re-opening.

Where required, we will also be making adjustments to our individual school fire drill procedures, which will be rehearsed with pupils during the first weeks back in school and as more pupils return.

Examinations will be taking place on each individual classroom in order to assess the available spaces and to determine how they will be utilised in the safest possible way and where resources are going to be needed.

## **Cleaning in School**

Once children are back in school, all frequently touched surfaces, equipment, door handles and toilets used during the day will be cleaned thoroughly each day.

Resources in work spaces will be kept to a minimum in order to make sure they can be wiped clean. Wherever possible, resources which are not easily washable or wipeable will be removed from these spaces.

## **Contact Between Groups**

All schools will be introducing procedures to reduce wherever possible contact between different groups of children and staff members.

It is still important to reduce contact between people as much as possible, so children and staff where possible, will only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group will stay away from other people and groups. Where it is possible to keep children within those small groups 2 metres away from each other, we will do so.

## **Free School Meal Vouchers**

The government have announced that the national voucher scheme will cease from the point at which children return to school. This will include the Whitsun break. Children claiming free school meals who attend school when it re-opens will be provided with a free prepared cold lunch.

Arrangements will be made in school for lunch and snack times so that children do not mix with children from other groups. Your individual schools will let you know what arrangements will be in place for your child.

## **PPE**

As a Trust we will adhere to the government guidance provided on [implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#). This guidance states that it is not necessary for staff to wear masks, gloves and aprons unless they are carrying out activities that would usually require the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) or if a child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs supervision until they can return home.

Any PPE worn by children in school needs to be removed before they enter the school. Guidance states that face coverings (or any form of medical mask where instructed to be used for specific clinical reasons) should not be worn in any circumstance by those who may not be able to handle them as directed, as this may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission.

## **Travel**

Please ensure that you are familiar with current government advice on transport recommendations to and from school, which means reducing any unnecessary travel on coaches, buses or public transport where possible (for example, by walking or cycling to school).

## **Communication to Follow from Your Individual Schools:**

- Allocated dates in which separate year groups are expected to return to school
- Pick-up and drop-off times including queuing procedures
- Revised home school agreements and behaviour policies
- Arrangements for lunches

Once the government provide schools with the go-ahead to open on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, our schools will get in touch with parents and carers of children in relevant year groups to confirm the arrangements.

### ***Vulnerable children and those whose parents/carers are key workers:***

Children who fall under this category will continue to have a space in school as normal. Parents and carers of these children are strongly encouraged to bring in their children, but the government have stated they will not face fines or other sanctions if they don't during this period.

Throughout this entire process the safety of our children, families and staff have remained our ultimate priority and any decisions we make are driven by this in line with the guidance provided by the government.

Thank you to those of you who have completed our recent survey on children returning to school when it re-opens. Having this information will assist us during this planning process.

As always, thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Amarjit Cheema OBE