

18 May 2020

Information to all Parents and Carers in Trust in Learning (Academies) Schools  
From: Mark Davies, CEO and on behalf of all headteachers



Dear Parent/Carers

### **Coronavirus (Covid 19)**

I hope that you, your family and your loved ones are well and keeping safe during these very challenging and difficult times for everyone.

I'm sure that you will be very aware that the Government has decided that from the week beginning 1st June there would begin a phased return of some further schooling for some children. This formed part of the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson's, roadmap for a staged response towards full recovery that he announced on Sunday 10th May.

As you will know our schools have not been closed. We have continued throughout this challenging time to provide in-school provision for children of key workers and our most vulnerable pupils or students, but this announcement makes clear the intention that we should all start to begin plans to further open our doors to more children, but to do this in a safe manner for pupils and of course for our staff.

Throughout last week the Government, through the Department for Education (DfE), has issued a number of guidance papers to support schools and Trusts like ours to plan for further opening. It is important for everyone to realise that these papers offer 'guidance' they are not musts that each school or Trust in England has to comply with or just 'do'. They offer guidance for the very simple fact that all schools, every one of them, are all very different. They could have been built over 100 years ago or opened last September, they could have playgrounds and fields or have very little outside space; they could have over 100 members of staff or just a handful. So how each school and trust manages to bring more children into their schools will inevitably be different.

In addition, of course, whilst the government has identified Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 as the first prioritised year groups to begin to return to our schools, each school will have to continue to maintain remote learning for the other children still at home. All of this needs very careful planning as well as capacity to put these intentions into practice and to offer some of you the opportunity for some of your children to return to school.

I think it is important for us all to understand that for any school to begin to introduce more children from the 1st June will be dependent upon whether the Government considers that its own conditions for re-opening have been met. Shortly before the end of this month that assessment will take place literally two or three days before English schools are being asked to bring more children into their schools.

Trust in Learning has decided that the most important thing to do for you, parents and carers, for your children and for our staff is to focus on getting this return right and safe. For this reason, we have decided that we will look to open our doors further for some identified year groups no earlier than Monday 8th June.

In the meantime, we will continue to provide key worker assistance with child care as well as in school support for vulnerable children.

In order for us to open our doors further from the week of the 8th June we will be planning to ensure that we have in place ways of working that ensures everyone's safety. We have been given guidance about limiting the amount of contact between different groups of children, and additional protective measures with which we are all now familiar, such as increased cleaning and hand washing and ensuring anyone with symptoms stays at home.

We are working hard right across the Trust and in school to put these measures in place. We are looking to group children into 'bubbles' with specified staff so that we can maintain separation within each school setting. But each school is different within the Trust and they will adopt practices that will be fit for purpose and for their own school. For example, with restrictions on the sizes of groups and the actual classrooms available on some sites, it may not be possible in all of our schools to provide a return to schooling for all of the groups intended by Government.

Each of our schools will, over the coming weeks, communicate with you directly and explain their plans on how they are going to make this happen. However, as a Trust our planned approach will be to:

1. Continue to provide in-school provision for key workers and vulnerable pupils/students
2. Plan to deliver in-school provision in line with the Governments priority order of:
  - I. Nursery
  - II. Reception
  - III. Year 1
  - IV. Year 6
  - V. Year 10 (starting with some form of face to face mentoring/support)
3. Continue to provide home based learning support for all other year groups
4. To maintain good communication with our communities and to engage with you as and when things change

It goes without saying that as a parent or a child thinking about returning to school after everything we have all been through it is going to be tough. There will be a high degree of anxiety and concern about the safety of your child whilst in our care. I absolutely understand this as will all of our staff, they too of course will be equally anxious of the expectations on them. What I can do is to keep reinforcing the message that we will be doing everything we can to provide a safe environment for your children and our staff. This return will not be a return to 'normal' it will be a return that seeks to very much limit contact and the possibility of people becoming ill, but it will be a phased return to some education and continued learning which is what we all want for our children, for our community and country

Yours sincerely



Mark Davies  
Chief Executive  
Trust in Learning (Academies)