



The Consortium Trust

Where together excellence and pupils thrive

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Friday 15th May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

First of all I hope that this letter finds you well during these unsettling times, I have been immensely proud of our collective response to the Covid-19 pandemic and that of course includes your support. We are now entering into a new phase and there will be a number of changes affecting our Trust, staff, families and pupils. What is absolutely key is for all to understand that we are not, and will not for some time to come, be operating in normal circumstances.

Parents cannot expect, at least initially, for class structures to be the same, for the same learning opportunities to be offered or for even the same teacher taking their child's class. There will be no off-site learning including sport, swimming lessons or educational visits until January 2021. We will not be able to offer PE team games, no assemblies, and classes will be restricted to a maximum of 15 pupils (and in some cases less). There will be no visitors permitted onto the school sites, including parents, and additional bio-security measures and PPE for certain tasks in school will be introduced.

As you will be aware the government has announced that '*at the earliest by June 1 – after half term – we believe we may be in a position to begin the phased reopening of shops and to get primary pupils back into schools, in stages, beginning with nursery, reception, Year 1 and Year 6*'. Opening of schools depends on the government's ability to meet the five conditions which the Prime Minister explained as follows:

- *We must protect our NHS.*
- *We must see sustained falls in the death rate.*
- *We must see sustained and considerable falls in the rate of infection.*
- *We must sort out our challenges in getting enough PPE to the people who need it, and yes, it is a global problem but we must fix it.*
- *And last, we must make sure that any measures we take do not force the reproduction rate of the disease - the R - back up over one so that we have the kind of exponential growth we were facing a few weeks ago.*

The Prime Minister has stressed that the plan was conditional on meeting these criteria and reaffirmed that the government's priority '*is to protect the public and save lives*'. Because the government's plan is conditional on meeting the five tests, I would urge you to be measured in the messages you are giving your children. I'm sure that all want to return to school to see their friends and teachers but please do not make any promises about when this will be. **The below timetable is only indicative and may change due to events beyond my control.**

Our indicative timeline and key dates to note are as follows:

22 nd May:	Our five education centres will close including the existing google classroom provision.
25 th -29 th May:	We will be observing half term, all schools will be closed to everyone, except our estates, caretaking and cleaning teams that will be preparing our school sites for the new term. This includes recommissioning the four schools that were temporarily closed at the start of the crisis.
1 st June:	This is a schedule PD day and will be the first time for many staff to have been together for some time, it is essential for staff to have opportunity to physically and mentally prepare for the next seven weeks. <u>There will be no provision for children on this day.</u>
2 nd June:	All eleven of our primary school open to nursery, reception, Year 1 and 6 along with existing identified pupils from other year groups in the vulnerable and key worker children categories. Launch of our single remote learning platform for all pupils not attending school.
22 nd June:	Anticipated and yet to be confirmed , extending of provision to all year groups.
22 nd July:	Final day of this academic year and all schools close at 315pm.

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The government recently published a document entitled [Actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020](#). This document provided further information to schools about the government plan. After reviewing this document and the accompanying [Protective measures document](#), with Trust leaders and our Academy Heads, we believed it was essential to provide honest and clear reflections on the requirements and guidance to ensure that you are fully informed about the considerations affecting the reintegration of pupils into our schools.

It must also be remembered that schools are still likely to be short staffed due to some members being required to self-isolate and some being in the [Clinically Extremely Vulnerable \(or living with a person with one of these conditions\) or Clinically Vulnerable groups](#). I am working with our staff well-being champions and Trade Union representatives to ensure that we have sufficient staff working in our schools. Our staff have been amazing throughout this period and I have no doubt, with your support they will continue to do their best.

It is important that as parents, you are reassured that the Trust is doing everything in its power to provide as safe an environment as possible for our staff and for your child. The Trust will follow government guidance in respect of this and ensure children are reminded of, and follow, hygiene procedures as well as ensuring additional cleaning of key areas, door handles, toilets and equipment used. The government guidance is also to 'remove soft furnishings, soft toys and toys that are hard to clean' (such as those with intricate parts). This will be followed, but will have a serious impact on the resources and activities available to pupils, particularly in early years (e.g. removal of rugs, no access to book corner, role play area etc.)

Trust leaders with our Academy Heads will monitor closely the health, safety and well-being of our whole school community and everyone has a part to play. No one will be admitted into the school site unless they are free from symptoms. If a child or anyone in your household has symptoms please do not bring your child to school. School leaders have the right to refuse admission and for everyone's safety I have encouraged them to do so. **It is with regret that when a child is unable or unwilling to comply with social distancing or behavioural expectations and the school is unable to keep them and others around them safe, they will also be refused entry to the school. This decision is immensely distressing for us all including staff, the decision will be reviewed at fortnightly intervals, and discussed with the affected parent and child.**

As ever, we are committed to opening schools as soon as we safely can. To facilitate our planning I have asked all schools to conduct welfare calls to all families starting with those with pupils in the government's target groups, nursery, reception, year 1 and 6. The calls are a courtesy and will help us plan for the next few weeks. Please note that these calls may come from 'unknown caller' numbers and will start on Monday. Please be prepared to take these calls. All calls will be sticking to the following script to find out some key information, staff will be unable to enter into protracted conversations at this stage. If you need to raise something further this will be noted and someone will call you back as soon as possible.

The script is as follows:

1. Are you intending to send your child to school on the 2nd June (N/R/1/6)? On the 22nd June (2/3/4/5)?
2. Are you and your partner key workers and do you require a place allocated to your child at school?
3. Would your child require any additional support to return to school?
4. On a scale 0-10, with 0 being not anxious and 10 being very anxious are you about your child coming to school?
5. What would make it feel safer for you?
6. Is there anything else you wish to raise (this will be noted down and someone will call you back)?

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As I have stated above, the way schools are run at least in the early stages of this new phase will be different to the 'old normal' we aim to create as near normal environment for your children as possible. Obviously complying with the latest Public Health England and DfE advice.

Our core offer between the 2nd June and 19th June will be:

- All schools are open for pupils in nursery, reception, Year 1 and Year 6.
- All schools will provide vulnerable learner and key worker child places for other year groups.
- Classes will not exceed 15 pupils.
- Pupils will be restricted to these educational 'bubbles' and will not mix with other groups while in school.
- Provision will be Monday to Friday, with the school being open between 830am and 4pm for pupils.
- The core teaching time for all schools will be 855am until 315pm, extended school provision is for key worker children only where this is necessary to support you to go to work. This needs to be agreed with the Academy Head in advance. There is no charge for extended provision for those that require it to work.
- A home learning platform will be provided to all pupils not attending school – this will be a central provision.
- Year 6 pupils will receive further guidance and support in preparation for transition to high school.

As the situation develop and we get more information from the government I will be able to advise you on the next phase from the 22nd June to the 22nd July, where it is expected the offer of places will be extended to all pupils.

It is understandable that some of you will remain very anxious about the reopening of schools and the increasing number of children attending as we head towards the summer holiday. The government, I believe, has recognised this and has stated 'Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time'.

- The Trust is attempting to be as flexible, understanding and compassionate in our approach as possible, we are all here to help, and would ask for parents to be equally flexible, understanding and compassionate towards us. None of us signed up for this, I truly hope that you and everyone you love are safe and well.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne
CEO & Principal

Cc: Trust Board and Members–
Locality Committee members
All Staff

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