



The Consortium Multi Academy Trust

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Next week and beyond

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

20th March 2020

Dear Colleagues

To start, I would like to thank everyone for your efforts to date in what is unsettling and fast moving times. I am particularly grateful to staff that are continuing to attend work and deliver the public service that is so crucially needed at this time. As you are aware from 4pm this afternoon schools will close and the Trust will be operating the following education centres as part of the coordinated national campaign to keep the country operating. Your contributions are needed now more than ever before.

I have earlier today issued a letter to parents and carers outlining the arrangements for the coming weeks, please ensure that you have received and read that letter as well.

Educational Centre Locations	Covering the following schools	Centre Leader
GLEBELAND	Barnby & North Cove and Glebeland	Debbie Thomas
MENDHAM	Mendham & St Edmund's	Susie Collins
RENDLESHAM	Rendlesham	Kevin Speirs
HENLEY	Henley & Helmingham	Steph Hawes
WINTERTON	Winterton	Caroline Richardson
SOUTHWOLD	Southwold	Bernie Cleland
YOXFORD	Yoxford & Peasenhall and Middleton	Gail Jerman

I wish to stress again that if **you are fit for work you must attend work**, for those that are in a vulnerable group as specified by the government you should self-isolate for a period of 12 weeks. BUT remain available for work and your education centre leaders will be in touch to direct you. As a reminder if you or anyone else in your household are displaying covid-19 symptoms you should report in sick and self-isolate for 14 days – returning to work at the end of the period.

I am aware that several colleagues have asked for guidance on 'asthma' you must read the directives from PHE, take your own medical advice but my understanding is that if you are diagnosed with asthma, have just a Ventolin inhaler, rarely use it and have no other medical condition you are not in a vulnerable group. Therefore you would be expected to attend work.

Well-being and mental health – in these unprecedented times we are all conflicted and it is essential that we able to share our concerns and anxieties. The Well-being provision is still operating, there will be staff at education centres who are mental health first aiders and well-being champions please use all the services available to you. We are a caring Trust and you will be supported through this period. Let's all just remember to be kind to each other.

Childcare - as a government designated key worker – your child's existing school must offer you provision. The Trust is also content at this time that staff children may attend the educational centre that the colleague is working at, even if the child does not attend a Trust school. Arrangements must be confirmed with Education Centre Leaders.

Self-isolation (not ill health) – for staff that are not permitted to attend a centre due to be in a vulnerable group category you are expected to be available for work during the education centres core hours. I hope that colleagues will be proactive in offering support to your designated education centre, through admin work (making welfare calls to others), helping with communications (developing the website platform), preparing learning resources, undertaking research and development tasks etc. Your education centre leader will confirm what is required of you.

CPD and training – we will be taking the opportunity over the coming weeks to implement a CPD and training package for all our staff, online courses will be shared with you and the expectation is that you will complete this training. Details will follow.

Additional hours – as a result of the new working arrangements there will be no additional hours claimed, the Trust is being hugely flexible in its approach to staff attendance at this time and I would like to hope that colleagues will be equally responsive. We have identified core hours that the centres are open and staff are required to be present for those times. On average I am anticipating that the total average weekly hours worked will be under the contracted paid hours for support staff.

Travel allowances – as a result of the new working arrangements there will no travel claims accepted, the Trust is exercising the mobility clause and the new education centre will be your designated place of work. There are a very few exceptions to this that have been agreed prior.

Easter break - The government appears to be requiring us to maintain the same provision indefinitely and this is likely to include the traditional Easter holiday and potential Whitsun. With the exception of the bank holidays it is likely that the education centres will need to operate. I am awaiting clarification from the DfE on this and will advise you as soon as possible. It is my view that families should try to have as normal an Easter as possible and stay at home if they can – holidaying in your garden and hopefully enjoying some ‘socially distant’ outdoor pursuits in the spring sunshine. I have advised parents of this but we may still be required to open our centres for some key workers.

Staffing – Considering all of the above, and the anticipated volume of pupils we are estimating currently that attendance will be around 20-25% of the school population. We will have enough staff for the education centres and I am planning once pupil numbers and staff attendance (please be fair and considerate to each other, while of course following health advice) to delegate authority to education centre leaders to be as flexible as possible in organising a rota going forward. It is my expectation that we will be able to put staff on a rolling two week on and two week off rota. This is yet to be confirmed, but I feel this would allow staff to rest in between shifts, balance out hours, provide opportunity for better home life and limit cross contamination. Please monitor your work emails over the weekend for details.

Central Team – from Monday the majority of the central team will be deployed to support our educational centres or working from home. A skeleton staff including myself will be operating the central functions of the Trust from Halesworth. Please note that the phone at Halesworth may not be monitored or answered so please communicate using email. I will respond as soon as I can to messages, as will other central staff. HR, payroll, wellbeing, safeguarding, and facilities management will all continue as normal. Our Area caretaking and estates team will continue working, focusing on the schools that are operating as education centres but will also take advantage when time allows to carry out tasks at our closed sites including redecoration of rooms.

Catering and cleaning – we are working with our contractors and normal services have been promised, this will be reviewed weekly. All staff may be asked (and I would suggest we should be very willing to) to support catering and cleaning functions at our education centres.

Communications – please check the Trust central website for Covid-19 updates and advice, all back letters are available on this page:

<https://consortiumacademy.co.uk/suffolk/primary/consortium-mat/site/pages/covid-19information/forstaff>

I will also send out at least a weekly staff briefing via email. I appreciate that this is not normal working practices, but we are not currently in normal times – please show your grit, resilience and flexibility. We are all here to support one another.

Assuring you of my best intentions, and wishing you and your families' good health during these difficult times. Most importantly of all, for all the mothers out there – I hope that whatever your circumstances currently you know that you are valued and loved. I hope you have the opportunity to celebrate in some way on Mothering Sunday. I am so proud of the *Consortium* family, everyone is being amazing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne', with a circular flourish at the beginning.

Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne
CEO & Principal

Cc: Trust Board and Members
Locality Committee members