22 May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Pupils in year groups whom the government wish schools to admit

As you know, the government has announced plans for schools gradually to admit an increased number of pupils after half term.

As a Trust, we have been working hard with our schools to consider the guidance and assess the circumstances of each of our schools. While everyone wants to see our children back in their classes as soon as possible, we have to consider the size of our classrooms and the number of staff we have available for work before deciding how many children we can safely manage at this time.

The Trust will not make a final decision on when it can begin the phased admission of more pupils into its schools until the government publish its advice on 28 May. At that point the Trust will do a final check on the plans in place for each school setting. Your school will therefore write to you on 1 June to let you know exactly what is happening. The schools will only be open for those children of key workers, and those children with particular needs, (as currently) who require it on 1 and 2 June.

If government announce on 28 May that schools can begin opening to more pupils, our schools will begin by opening on 3 June for reception children only. We will phase the return of others pupils over several days as we check that we can operate school safely. There will continue to be provision for key worker children and some children with particular needs on every day as before.

As I am sure you are already aware, for those children returning to school, their school experience will not be the same as it was before COVID-19. Your school will explain to you and your child more about what it might look and feel like. Above all, we will be seeking to provide a safe environment for pupils and our staff.

In order to help keep everyone safe, we need to ask for your help. The social distancing protocols in school will be explained to your child and they will have lots of reminders and support to keep to them. However, any child who is not able to behave in the way that the school asks, the school will be discussing with you whether your child can in fact manage to be in school safely.

Similarly, we would ask that your household follow social distancing rules carefully so that your child does not bring an increased risk of COVID-19 into their school. This means that your child’s contacts out of school should be in strict adherence to the government’s guidance on social distancing. For children in private before and after school care outside their household, schools will need to do an individual risk assessment to ensure that the child’s overall number of possible contacts remains low.

We know that education is important and that many children who have that choice will benefit from being in school. However, no school can be entirely without risk at this time and the government accept that not all parents will want to send their children back to school. Parents who do not send their children to school will not face fines or other sanctions.
We are very aware that the majority of children in our schools will have to remain at home for the time being. We know that is often challenging. Our schools will continue to provide home learning, as they have since 20 March. The work done by children in school will be the same as that for those in the same class who are learning from home. However, the gradual opening of our schools will mean that most of our teachers are in school and might not be able to give feedback to those at home as widely or as quickly. We will keep this and all our operational plans under careful review.

These are difficult times but we are working hard to do the best we can for all our pupils and staff. Getting this right for our children has to be a partnership between government, the trust, our headteachers, our staff and our parents. We all have our role to play and I want to thank you all for your support as we try to welcome back as many pupils as we can in the weeks ahead.

Kind regards

[Signature]

Dr Carin Taylor
Executive Headteacher