



8 June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Update on wider access to Primary Schools – week one

As we reach the end of the first week ‘back’ after half-term, I wanted to provide an update for you on the wider re-opening of our Trust Primary Schools.

Having received feedback from our Headteachers this morning, I continue to be so proud of the resilience and motivation within our schools; staff have worked really positively to process the complex and evolving advice from the DfE, to prepare classrooms and to be ready to welcome our first few groups of pupils with smiling faces and a confident outlook. Thank you also to you for your messages of support – you know and recognise that this has been no easy task – just saying that to our staff means the world!

Increasing access

‘Phase one’ of our widening access plan is now in place and our first groups of younger pupils are enjoying being back at school. Schools will shortly be providing further information related to welcoming year 1 on 15th June and year 6 on 22nd June. Watch out for further details from individual schools.

As ‘lockdown’ gradually lifts we are beginning to have a significant uplift in Key Worker numbers across our primary schools. This is already beginning to impact on schools with regard to both the physical room space available and staffing available for teaching ‘bubble’ groups.

I think it is only fair to notify families that because teaching groups cannot currently be above 15 students per ‘bubble’, there may begin to be constraints on our schools in terms of physical space and available staffing.

The government guidance is clear that schools need to manage their capacity to the best of their ability but should prioritise access in the following order:

1. Key Worker children and vulnerable pupils
2. Early years pupils – nursery and reception
3. Year 1
4. Year 6

In some of our schools we may encounter a scenario where opening to year 6 may not be possible on 22nd June as planned because we may have to prioritise capacity to open additional Key Worker ‘bubbles’.

Our school leaders will continue to work hard to mitigate against this, but I wanted to ensure that all families are clear that the sustainability of any provision on a site is not definite in these complex times.

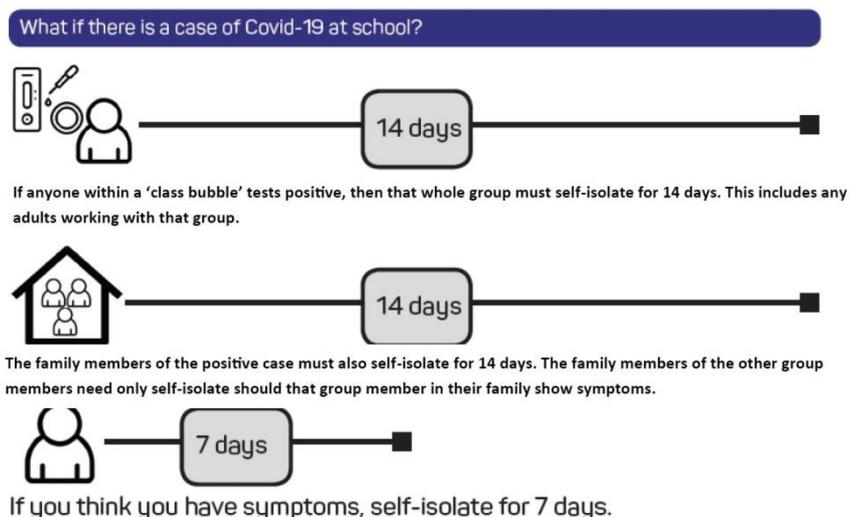
Distance learning

We have received some enquiries regarding the provision of some 'live' on-line teaching for pupils to support distance learning. The Trust's view until now has been that our schools would not be providing this method of learning because of on-line safety concerns for both pupils and staff. We are now moving to a position where we hope to have appropriate measures and safeguards in place to enable this to begin taking place. This will be trialled by some of our schools with limited numbers of children before it becomes an optional approach across the Trust. I will provide an update when I have more information to share with you.

Again, I must alert parents to the fact that as more designated groups of children return to school and with the government's maximum class size expectation, our capacity to provide on-line learning may diminish as staff need to be re-deployed to other classes for 'face to face' teaching. We will, of course, continue to do our very best!

Reporting confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases

We have been asked for some clarity on reporting confirmed and suspected COVID-19. As per DfE guidance, where we have a confirmed case of Covid-19, the entire 'bubble' needs to self-isolate for 14 days. This is summarised on amended diagram below:



As a Trust we have agreed that if a pupil presents with suspected COVID-19 symptoms, as well as arranging for that pupil to go home (and possibly subsequently be tested), we will inform all families in their 'bubble' so that parents can monitor their children carefully.

Yours faithfully,

Martyn Sibley
Chief Education Officer

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