



South York

MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

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Dear Parent/ Carer,

I write to update you on the key points relating to the government guidance on the full opening of schools from September that was published yesterday. As you will be aware from the extensive media coverage surrounding this, it is now the government's stated intention that all schools and specialist settings will open at the start of the new academic year and that a broad and balanced curriculum will be offered full-time to pupils. It is important to note that parents/carers will now be expected to send their children back to school, unless particular specified medical circumstances apply, with the usual sanctions for non- attendance now applying.

We very much share the government's view of the importance of education and of getting all our pupils back into our schools as soon as possible. In light of this, we will continue to work hard over the next few weeks and months to seek to facilitate a safe return to school for our students and staff. As ever, there will be immense work required behind the scenes to interpret and implement this guidance in the manner required to suit the safe opening of each of our schools. This will require many hours of planning and work on site to produce the risk assessments and the guidance needed to underpin the safe operating arrangements for each school, given their different intakes, school layout, staffing and rooming resources and curriculum requirements. This is a complex and time consuming piece of work that will take time to work through.

In light of the above, I write to give you some general information on what principles will govern our operation from September so you have a broad sense of what to expect. The actual arrangements for each school will be communicated later once our Headteachers and staff have had time to work through this guidance and determine their school operation in line with this. While I fully appreciate your desire for full information on school reopening, I very much appeal for your patience in allowing our school leaders time to provide this. They will communicate their school details to you as soon as they are able to.

The general points to note are:

- Schools are expected to open full-time to all year groups from September.
- Early identification of symptoms, test and trace will assume critical importance in suppressing virus levels and in managing any future outbreaks. Given this, future lock downs may well be on a local basis and self-isolation may well be on a school, year group, class or individual/ family basis as required.

- While social distancing will no longer fully apply, schools will work to minimise the number of contacts that pupils and staff have within the school day and to minimise close contact where possible. Social distancing will continue to be promoted and observed wherever practical and classrooms will tend to be arranged with forward facing desks with the teacher at the front of the class as the norm.
- Schools will be required to implement a range of protective measures to reduce the risk of transmission. These will include the creation of class or year group 'bubbles' to reduce social contact, the modification of some curriculum activities such as PE and Music, and the consideration of the use of staggered start/finish times and those for breaks/lunches. Enhanced cleaning regimes and the promotion of further protective measures such as regular hand washing and the 'Catch It, Bin It, Kill It' approach will operate and will be promoted in all our schools.
- Our curriculum will seek to operate on a broad and balanced basis though adaptations will be needed to address identified learning gaps. Additional funding from the government will be utilised to address specific learning gaps identified and to provide tutoring for specified groups and individuals identified in government guidance. This funding will be utilised based on the professional judgment of the Headteachers and key staff within our schools.
- Additional pastoral support and curriculum guidance will be used to address any well-being issues relating to the pandemic and to promote the wellbeing and mental health of those in our schools.
- While non-overnight domestic school visits may resume, we will ensure any planned visits are subject to review and additional risk assessment considerations before these are allowed to take place.
- Strong standards of behaviour are crucial to the safe and effective return of pupils to our schools. Pupils will be expected to follow our systems and approaches to support behaviour for learning on their return to school in order to protect all those in our school community.
- School uniform should continue to be worn with regular washing and good hygiene requirements followed in relation to this. While students should now bring in their own essential equipment such as pens and pencils, where these are not already supplied individually by schools, additional items of clothing and equipment brought into school must be minimised. Individual schools will inform you what equipment is required.
- Normal end of year assessments are scheduled to resume in primary schools in summer 2021 with GCSE exams and A levels taking place in Fulford. OFQUAL are currently looking at possible adaptations for the summer 2021 GCSE and A level examinations but we know no more on this at present. Further information will be shared in due course. Those pupils unable to sit GCSE and A level exams this summer, and who wish to improve their calculated grades will have the opportunity to sit exams in a special exam series in the autumn term.
- All schools will continue to provide remote learning for those unable to return to school due to self-isolating. We will also be required to have contingency plans to resume wider scale remote learning in the face of any further lock down.

Our Trust and school leaders, in addition to school leaders across the city, are now working on how we safely implement this guidance in our schools. The logistics of doing this are particularly challenging in terms of managing busy points of transition around our school sites and on school transport where this is applicable. As I mentioned earlier, working out the detail of how each school will operate safely, and in line with this new guidance, via their daily routines, will require considerable thought and planning.

Thank you for your support for our schools, our Headteachers and school leaders at this time. They have an unenviable task in seeking to make this guidance work with no funding for additional resourcing. I am very mindful of the continued pressures our Headteachers, in particular, are working under.

Please be assured that we, within our Trust and each of our schools, are working hard to achieve the safe return to school of all our pupils and staff. We will, as ever, seek to do this in open partnership and with the aim of providing strong reassurance to all those in our Trust and school communities.

Yours faithfully,



Lorna Savage
Trust CEO