

Friday 10th July 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, Carers, Children and Young People,

As we near the end of the term and the end of the most unprecedented of school years I wanted to offer my continued thanks and appreciation for the support that you have offered to the schools, staff, and to the children throughout this period of lockdown.

In my letter last week, I set out a timeline and some commitments to enable you to be as informed as possible about our plans for September. The DfE sent out the guidance for September opening at the end of last week, and we have spent much of the last week in preparation for the next phase of our planning.

We will be working on the basis of 3 scenarios, each dependent on the guidance given at the point of the planned return to school in September:

1. All pupils/students return in September in line with the opening plans outlined already by each school; or
2. A phased return for pupils/students with some blended learning (home and school); or
3. A continuation of lockdown with blended learning and timetabled in school education for specific groups.

Each of these scenarios is dependent on a number of factors such as a rise or fall in the R-rate, the prevalence of a second spike in Covid-19, the potential for local lockdowns, the possibility of confirmed cases in a bubble or in a school, a further period of national lockdown. Whilst we do not really wish to have to consider options 2 and 3, we know that we must plan for them in order that we can act with immediacy should we have to. I would, however, like to stress that our key focus is on bringing back all of our children and young people in September so that we can return to education consistently within our schools.

But not back to 'education as normal', as September onwards will be far from normal – the ways that we will need to work in our schools will be very different and it is for this reason that we have been working hard to develop our 'Recovery Curriculum' and our recovery approaches to the return in September in order that we can get back into learning, can seek to close any gaps in learning and to expand upon some of the amazing skills that we know many of our children and young people have grown and developed during this period of lockdown, and to ensure the health and wellbeing of everyone over the forthcoming months. Each school will begin to share what this and the curriculum will look like before the end of term next week and we are excited about what we are going to be able to do, and to once again have our schools full.

In order for us to be able to do this safely and effectively we all have to focus on some key areas required by the Government. We need everyone in our school communities to take responsibility for the actions that relate to them, and to all act in accordance with them for the safety and security of everyone. In order for us to be able to open the schools safely we are all required to:

- a) Not come to school if you are unwell, and to report this to the school office immediately
- b) To ensure high levels of personal cleanliness – clean hands, etc regularly – on entering school, before lessons, after lessons... as directed by the school and the guidance
- c) To ensure high levels of respiratory hygiene, particularly the use of tissues and following the 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' principles.
- d) To provide enhanced cleaning in schools
- e) For everyone to engage with Test, Track and Trace
- f) To manage negative tests. Schools have been asked to manage negative test results through the continuation of a 14-day self-isolation period in specific circumstances.

- g) To manage confirmed cases. Where cases are confirmed Public Health England will guide the process and all schools are required to follow the guidance given
- h) Contain any outbreak. Following guidance from Public Health England, in the case of any outbreak a decision will be made to close a bubble, a group of bubbles, or the school.

Key to our opening plans will be the size of the 'bubbles' that we implement, and these will reflect the needs and the context of each school. The 'bubbles' need to ensure that we can provide safe access to learning and ensure, where possible, the appropriate levels of social distancing. The size of bubble has also been chosen to ensure that we can provide continuity of staffing and opportunity, and to ensure that the running of the school day is not impacted adversely. A good example of this is in relation to lunchtimes, where phased lunch sittings for bubbles could effectively take all day, which is not appropriate.

You will be informed by your school this week of the size of the bubbles that pupils/students will be working in. This may be classes, year groups or cohorts, mixed year groups or half key-stage, or whole key stages in our smaller schools. The size of the bubble has, in each of our schools, been fully risk assessed and agreed as appropriate for that school and setting. The schools will then also be able to give you an overview of the way that school will start in September and will confirm the starting date for your child. This can only be an overview at this stage as we are all still planning and preparing for September's re-opening.

Some schools may be in a position to offer Wrap-around-care, and/or Breakfast Clubs, but again these will be based on strict risk assessment and ensuring safety of the provision. We have been advised by the Government that we can and should phase the opening of these provisions, and so your school will advise you if it is possible for these to run. We will ensure that you are regularly updated as we do start to open the Wrap-around-care and Breakfast Club provisions from September, where possible. There will not be any school-run after-school clubs running on our return, and we will continue to risk assess these in order to judge when we can restart them too.

We will ensure that you have information in a timely manner and will confirm on 28th August our final plans for opening based on the guidance and Governmental direction.

I hope that this offers some further reassurance of our next steps in each of our schools. I will write again next week to confirm our ongoing plans.

With kind regards,

Jez Piper

CEO

Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust