



Date: 19 May 2020

Dear Parents & Carers

An update regarding the re-opening of schools

We are aware that the last 2 months have been extremely difficult for many families. Routines have changed, parents have had to home-school and work from home, whilst others have been furloughed or have lost their only form of income. Many of us are missing the direct contact we would normally enjoy with our families and friends and may have experienced the devastating impact of this disease. This has undoubtedly had an impact on all of us along with the uncertainty of what the future brings.

We are writing to you all to provide an update of the work and approach that is being progressed here in Trafford following the Government's latest announcements on 10th May regarding the re-opening of schools.

As you are aware, since 23rd March, schools have remained open only to children of critical workers and vulnerable children and I am sure you will join us in thanking every member of staff that has worked so hard to make this happen not just during term time but throughout the school holidays. Working to support schools to safely open for a wider group of pupils requires very careful consideration and planning and it is right that we take time to consider how we can do this; so we want to share with you some of the progress to date. The Prime Minister stated his ambition for schools to potentially open for children and young people in specific year groups from 1st June. The Government have now asked all Primary schools to open for all children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Secondary schools, sixth forms, and further education colleges will also begin some face to face support with Year 10 and Year 12 pupils. Special schools should work towards welcoming back as many children and young people as can be safely catered for and in childcare settings, providers will be asked to welcome back all children below statutory school age.

We believe that 1st June is premature and we will continue to be guided by the science as **everyone's safety, health and well-being is of the utmost importance.**

Although schools will continue to remain open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children in all year groups, some of you will rightly remain concerned about the safety of your children and your families if your children do return to school.

Therefore, we will enable schools, where possible to re-open on 8th June following the half term break and have a further two days to plan, prepare and train their staff to in advance of children attending on 10th June. It has been agreed that secondary schools will return on 1st June as their half term is typically shorter and that they too, adopt the option to take a further 2 days to plan and prepare staff if necessary.

Schools will need to determine the demand for places and you should inform your Headteacher of your intentions as schools may not be able to guarantee a place and operate safely. Parental choice is key – and you should make the decision that is right for you and your family.

With scientific advice central to the Government's decision, the Department for Education has provided additional guidance to school leaders on the steps they should take as they plan for reopening, which includes:

- Carrying out a risk assessment before opening to more children so that sensible measures can be put in place to minimise risks for both children and staff.
- Making sure that children and young people do not attend if they or a member of their household has symptoms of Coronavirus.
- Promoting regular hand washing for 20 seconds and ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' approach.
- Cleaning more frequently to get rid of the virus on frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles, handrails, table tops, play equipment and toys.
- Minimising contact through smaller classes or group sizes and altering the environment as much as possible, such as changing the layout of classrooms.
- Reducing mixing between groups through timetable changes, such as staggered break and lunch times and by introducing staggered drop-off and collection times at different times.

The Government is encouraging children in the eligible year groups to attend, unless they are self-isolating or there are other reasons for absence (such as shielding due to health conditions). Unfortunately, it is likely siblings in different year groups, unless those siblings are children of critical workers or vulnerable children, will not be able to attend at this time.

It should be noted that parents will not be fined for their children's non-attendance if they do not attend during these arrangements.

The Government has produced further information for parents and carers. This information provides answers to a number of key questions and you can find this document by clicking the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

Headteachers and their Governing Bodies are currently working tirelessly to consider and respond to the Government's recent advice and guidance. The plans and work they are putting in place include:

- The undertaking of risk assessments.
- Progressing robust logistical plans and making the necessary changes to ensure that their schools can open safely for the identified groups of children, young people and their staff.

Trafford Council is actively supporting all schools and their leaders in working through the very complex planning that this requires. We would want to assure you that everyone's health and safety is of paramount consideration and that all school leaders are committed to this as well as continuing to support our children's learning and education.

Getting this right will take time and we thank you for your patience. As soon as Headteachers are in a position to share further information with you about their plans for opening, they will. We will continue to review the current position and amend guidance if the situation changes.

Every school is different and, as a result, arrangements in every school will be unique to their individual circumstances which we fully support.

Yours sincerely



Jill McGregor
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