

27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

## **COVID – 19 Update Week Beginning 30<sup>th</sup> March Frequently Asked Questions**

We want to update you around how our Trust schools are adapting to the new circumstances which we all find ourselves in.

Across last week we had a small number of keyworker and vulnerable pupils remaining in our schools. We are very grateful that the majority families are following national advice that remains:

***If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading. The Government is asking parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible – schools will remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.***

Families are helping enormously by keeping children at home. The Government's advice over the weekend has made it very clear that every person who can stay at home could be saving lives. For the staff and children remaining in our schools, we are managing and maintaining social distancing measures at all times.

During closure, our teaching and support staff will be directed to work remotely as much as is possible to help stop the spread of the virus. A rota system has been implemented for staff to come into school to supervise the children still in attendance. We are closely monitoring staff numbers and those who are affected by the current situation themselves, either through illness, self-isolation measures or caring responsibilities. Not all of our support and administrative staff have access to equipment that would allow them to work remotely. However, we are working to ensure school offices remain staffed – please bear with us if response times are less consistent than usual.

### **Frequently asked questions by parents**

Over the last week we have compiled a list of the frequently asked questions we have received from across all our Trust schools. Please check if your question is answered below before contacting school.

### **1. How will we keep in touch with you?**

Queries over email to teaching staff will be answered, but we cannot guarantee that responses will be as timely as we would usually be able to manage. We are only able to answer **emergency** questions over the telephone.

The Trust website and your school website will be updated regularly with information.

### **2. Will I need to register my child with you each day?**

No. While school is closed, you will be responsible for the care of your child during the day. We will not be monitoring their movements, nor can we be responsible for the extent to which your child engages with the learning activities that are provided.

### **3. Will school provide work for my child to be doing while the school is closed?**

Teachers will provide activities for children to complete and will be in contact with you. However, we will not be running lessons remotely. Parents should not expect teachers to deliver content over Skype, YouTube, Social Media or through remote 'chat' facilities. Teachers may email children, but will only use school email addresses. Work will not be provided over the Easter Holidays.

### **4. How much work should my child be completing during this time?**

Teachers will provide activities and these may be set over an extended period of time. Good learning habits during this time should be encouraged age appropriate time set aside for learning new things and engaging with educational activities. Clearly, families will have flexibility around when that happens, but we would encourage you to support your children in maintaining a similar structure to their existing school day.

### **5. Will work that pupils produce during this time be marked or assessed?**

No. Schools are closed. Staff will be providing activities and suggestions for learning only.

### **6. Will I be expected to print off electronic resources?**

No. Teachers will try to avoid setting work or sharing resources that cannot be completed on a screen although some paper resources will be available for children who do not have access to electronic equipment.

### **7. Will planned trips, visits or events continue?**

No. During the period of school closures, all planned school activity will cease.

**8. My child is entitled to Free School Meals. I am worried about the cost of feeding them during this period of closure.**

A voucher system has been set up that will allow parents to spend an equivalent amount of money in supermarkets. Those eligible will be contacted regarding this. If you are eligible and have not received an email or contact, or if you think you may become eligible during the period of this emergency, please [enquiry@wychall.drbignitemat.org](mailto:enquiry@wychall.drbignitemat.org) for advice

**9. My child is becoming very worried and anxious. I'm concerned about their well-being. What can I do?**

If you are worried about your how your child is coping with the current situation please contact your school who will be able to signpost you to a dedicated support helpline.

**10. We do not have internet access. What can I do?**

This is not an easy situation to remedy. Where families are in self-isolation, or where connection is temporarily lost, there may be a disruption in your ability to receive work under such circumstances. We recommend that as much work as possible is downloaded and saved to avoid absolute reliance on a continual internet connection.

**11. We do not have a computer that my child can use at home. What can I do?**

Please contact your child's teacher to alert them to the situation. We do not have enough laptop computers or devices to provide equipment to children for use at home, but we will work with you to try and provide solutions where possible. It is important that you tell us if your child is struggling to access or complete home learning activities.

**12. I think my child's teacher is on Facebook or Twitter – should I contact them?**

No. We have explicitly instructed staff not to use social media to communicate with parents or wider members of the school community. We have asked them not to respond if approached, so please do not be offended if you receive no response.

***We ask you, as parents/carers, to please avoid using social media to criticise teachers or schools at this time. It only tends to spread***

***misinformation and place people under further stress. If you are unhappy with an aspect of what we are doing, please contact with the school office.***

**13. I have heard that another school is using a different approach. I don't understand why you can't do the same.**

All school situations are unique, and schools will be learning a lot during this period about how best to work in these new ways. Schools and teachers also have varying types of software, resources and skill levels available to draw upon. We will be monitoring good practice throughout this time and will contact you should alternative or new approaches be introduced.

**14. How will we tell you when the situation changes?**

We will use the usual methods for contacting you as well as updating the Trust and school websites.

**15. My child is in Year 2 or Year 6. What about the SATs Tests?**

The Department for Education has been clear that no statutory testing will take place this year.

**Finally**

Please be reassured that at all times we will follow the latest advice from Government, Public Health England and our local authorities.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support and understanding. By working together, we are confident that we will navigate this difficult period effectively. Please be patient with us while we try and transition to the new arrangements and remote way of working.

Take care of yourselves and each other.

Best wishes



Rob Bowater, Trust CEO