



## LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

20<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear parents and carers,

### **Re: Steps toward the resumption of schools after 1<sup>st</sup> June**

You will know that the government has asked schools to plan toward the resumption of onsite teaching for years Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 in primary and to plan for some face to face learning for Years 10 and 12 in secondary schools. In principle, our Trust welcomes this. While recognising the work done by staff and families to support home study, we believe that school is the very best place for learning. However, the health and well-being of our pupils and staff is the over-riding priority and we will only reopen a school if we are sufficiently confident that to do so would be safe.

I have been working with Headteachers to develop plans for future reopening which are based on detailed and robust Risk Assessments. Heads have been consulting with staff in their schools this week and are putting every reasonable step in place to ensure that if and when we reopen it will be in a safe environment. We cannot remove every risk but we will use strict hygiene routines, social distancing and clear procedures to limit unnecessary contact with objects and surfaces so that your children and our staff are as safe as it is possible to be. Your school will be contacting you to share the new arrangements that they are putting in place. Plans will be specific to each individual school.

It is the LSP's Board of Trustees who will decide whether and when to reopen schools having reviewed Risk Assessments over the coming weekend. The Local Governing Body at the school will be reviewing the Risk Assessments this week and will make recommendations and give advice to support the Trustees in their decision. We will only reopen if we are confident in the measures in place to keep everyone safe. Although the school will now be informing you of their current plans, these will not be finalised until the Trustees have authorised them early in the Half Term week. Even then, we will await the Government's confirmation that the pandemic is continuing to decline and that in their view schools should reopen to Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. I appreciate that this uncertainty is far from ideal but I am sure that you will understand that we must be very thorough as the situation continues to develop and new information is available. If our plans change, we will let you know immediately.

The education unions remain cautious about the government's proposals. We have been working very constructively with representatives from the unions at Trust level and they have given helpful advice on developing our Risk Assessments. We will have to see how the unions' position develops as they negotiate with government. This remains an unknown factor and may affect our capacity to open next month.

**Chief Executive: Mr G J Lewis MA**

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Simultaneous to all this we have been working incredibly hard behind the scenes in developing our provision for home learning. This is highly important as for many pupils there is no end in sight to their learning at home. We have recognised that we need much greater IT capacity to deliver a more comprehensive and interactive model and this week and next week we are building new platforms in every school based on Microsoft Teams. You will hear more about this once staff have been trained and we have the ability to roll it out class by class during term 6. You may also have noticed that we are sharing more materials between schools and this will enable us to deliver more feedback and support to your child from our teachers and teaching assistants.

Meanwhile we continue to deliver our childcare and support to children of key workers and to our priority pupils. The conflicting needs of social distancing once more pupils return to primary schools is forcing some tough decisions on us about what we can do and what we cannot. I hope that you will understand that we will be doing our very best but that some limitations on the care offer to key workers may now be necessary. The school will share information if this affects your school.

The responsibilities on schools are now very considerable and we face some weighty decisions in coming days. These pressures are made more manageable in the context of our close partnership within the Trust. I am incredibly grateful to our staff, our Headteachers and our Governors and Trustees for their flexibility and willingness to embrace these changes. Our Trust is founded on values of service and professional generosity and I feel fortunate that in a crisis my colleagues are displaying those so well.

Thank you for your support for the school and the Trust. In our developing response to the crisis, we are building our offer. I hope that you have seen evidence of that already and that we can continue to work in partnership to do our very best for your family in coming times.

With very best wishes,



Gary Lewis

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