

Dear Parents and Carers,

3 June 2020

RE: Update on staggered reopening of NEST schools

I am writing to provide you with a brief update on the phased reopening of schools across the Trust. You will have seen the government's announcements and media speculation over half term and we know that the national picture for school reopening is mixed, for many different reasons. NEST schools have now opened to pupils from Yr1 and from Yr6 in our Junior Schools. Our primary schools will open to Yr6 pupils from June 8th.

Although we are pleased to have opened to our pupils, the significant logistical and practical issues of operating with a range of restrictions remains challenging. The plans which have been drawn up by school leaders need to be flexible and will be reviewed regularly against the schools' risk assessments. Anything that jeopardises the safety of anyone in our schools will lead to an immediate review of the plans and may result in changes. We will also need to factor in the frequent guidance and directives from the DfE. We will not be announcing the next phase of opening until we are satisfied that health and safety arrangements are working effectively across all of our schools. We are also aware that there have been many changes to the government's position on the wider reopening of schools and wait for further clarification from the DfE before we announce next steps. We ask you to be patient with school leaders and staff as they implement their opening plans and risk assessments and wait for updated DfE guidance.

Test and Trace

If a child is showing symptoms of COVID-19 in school, the child will be isolated and parents will be asked to collect their child as soon as possible. We will inform you of any suspected cases in your child's group/bubble. We will request that the child or adult with the suspected case get a test as soon as possible.

If a child or adult has a **confirmed** case of COVID-19 then the 'bubble' will be closed down immediately, and children and adults should self-isolate for 14 days. We will notify the whole school community and LA if there are any confirmed case of COVID-19 in any of our schools. As part of the national test and trace programme, if additional cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise schools and other settings on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases, a larger number of other children or staff may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole class, year group or site. Following any closure, schools will undertake enhanced cleaning and isolation periods will be in place according to guidance. Further information on the NHS Test and Trace service can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-nhs-test-and-trace-service>

Key Worker Children:

Facilitating the attendance of children of key workers is a crucial factor in the ways in which schools are planning for children to return. We are aware that, if the numbers of children from key workers rises dramatically as we begin to emerge from tight restrictions, we may need to review our provision to other year groups, as there is significant pressure on the building capacity and staffing at some of our schools. Leaders are working hard to accommodate the increasing numbers of children of key workers but are limited by staffing and accommodation. Consequently, places may need to be signposted to other schools within the Trust.

Children in year groups yet to be welcomed back, or where parents/carers have decided not to send their child(ren) back to school, will be continuing with the home learning set by teachers at the school until DfE guidance changes. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continuous support in helping your child(ren) learn from home. I appreciate that the on-going situation is proving challenging for families in lots of ways but have been impressed with the positive and adaptable way you have responded to the activities set by your schools to support your child(ren) at home.

I will write to you again next week, with further details on our next phase of reopening.

Yours faithfully,

Paula Farrow

CEO