

5th November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to start by thanking you for supporting the robust processes and procedures leaders at your schools have put in place to minimise the risk to others. These systems have gone extremely well; school attendance across the Trust has been very high and it has been a pleasure to see pupils enjoying their lessons, playing and socialising with friends.

You will no doubt be aware of the increased COVID lockdown restrictions which take effect from today. This second lockdown will be different to the first in that schools will remain open to all pupils full-time. It is 'business as usual' across NEST schools so please continue to send your child in as long as they are fit and well. If, however, your child develops any Covid-19 symptoms then please keep them at home and then contact your school as soon as possible.

As a Trust, please be assured that our priority has been, and will continue to be, to follow, and go beyond, DfE and PHE guidance to keep our children and staff safe when they are attending school. Strict control measures such as hand and surface hygiene, 'bubbles' to reduce number of contacts, and directional controls to reduce face-to-face contact, remain key elements of maintaining our safe school environments. Headteachers continue to ensure that their comprehensive risk assessments are fit for purpose and reviewed regularly. As ever, the safety of our pupils and staff remains paramount. Please help us by continuing to remain vigilant in watching out for signs of Covid within your own family and close contacts so that the virus is not brought into school.

Whilst we will endeavour to ensure that our schools are Covid secure, it is possible that we will see a rise in the number of children and staff needing to self-isolate or being tested positive for coronavirus over the next few weeks. This could mean the closure of bubbles at short notice. All of our schools have secure plans in place to transfer from school-based learning to home-based learning when necessary and we are very grateful for your support as parents and carers in ensuring that children are engaging with home learning during this difficult period.

On a practical note, and if the weather allows, schools will be keeping windows open to increase air flow and improve ventilation. Children will not be sitting in cold classrooms, but you might wish to provide some additional base layers for your children over the next few months.

The challenges of this term have not been easy for our leaders and staff, who have worked tirelessly to ensure that our pupils have not been adversely affected. I would like to thank them again for their hard work. None of us can predict what the next few months will hold. However, given the way that our schools and families have supported each other these past months, I am confident we can deal with this new national situation. Our focus absolutely remains on keeping everyone safe. Thank you all for playing your part.

Yours faithfully,

Paula Farrow
CEO