



19th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Opening Schools to Wider Groups of Pupils

Following on from the Government announcement that schools in England may begin to open for more pupils from 1st June 2020, we are writing to update you with regards to the plans that we are making for the schools in our Trust.

As you will have heard in the media, schools will open if the Government decide it is safe to do so. The current pandemic has left us all with a challenging set of circumstances and we recognise the impact it is having on our whole school community. As a Trust we are going to do everything we can to make sure that when we open for wider groups of children, we do so in a safe and manageable way; building gradually and methodically the number of children that are in school. We are committed to continue to support the children of key workers and priority children, as we have done since the 20th March 2020.

Our schools are currently using guidance available from the Department for Education, Together for Children Sunderland and Unions to plan for wider opening by starting with identified priority groups. These year groups are Nursery, Reception, Y1 and Y6 starting with the youngest children. We are creating detailed plans that each school will share with you as soon as possible so that you will know what opening will look like in practice. We will continue to be available to answer your concerns using the channels that have worked so effectively in lockdown. The precautions we are planning will include:

- Staggering the start and the end of the day to limit the number of people on the school site.
- Staggering break and lunchtimes so that we can adhere to social distancing
- Limiting the number of children and adults in a classroom
- Developing a curriculum that re-establishes routines and supports the wellbeing of children
- Continuing to promote good hygiene and handwashing
- Increasing cleaning during the school day
- Asking staff, children and parents to follow the guidance for quarantine if they show symptoms.

We understand that current uncertainties may cause you some anxiety and you may decide you do not wish for your child to return at this time. Some of you may be shielding, deemed as vulnerable or feel that your child is safer at home. As we update you with our plans for wider opening, parents will be in a better position to make an informed decision.

The Trust will be moving through this opening phase with caution, starting with the youngest children as directed by the Government. We know that our schools may look very different from the ones that closed in March 2020. East Herrington Primary Academy and Hetton Lyons Primary School will soon be sending out information on their plans for welcoming your children back to school and how they are working towards making our schools the safe places you expect. The children will need time to adapt to this and be supported to understand the changes that have taken place in their lives, both at home and in school.

We would like to thank you for your continued support, patience and understanding in helping your child to learn from home and in keeping in contact with us. We will continue to do our best to support families with home learning. The Trust will keep you updated regularly with further information from the Government as we receive it and decisions are taken. We will also continue to ask your opinions on our plans and procedures in this wider opening phase.

We hope all of our families are keeping safe and well.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Susan Bell
Chief Executive Officer



Mr Peter Chapman
Chair of Directors

