



Quality First Education Trust

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Executive Headteacher

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Dear Parents /Carers,

I hope you and your family are well. The wellbeing of you and your family, all our children and all our staff is our number one priority. The first aim of the Q1E Trust and its schools is that all children and staff are "safe".

When seeking to make the right decisions during these unprecedented times, we are led by this priority and by the trust's other aims which are that all staff and children: are excellent learners; have excellent social and emotional skills; achieve and succeed.

Our trust board has met every week since it was first announced that schools might close. It will continue to meet weekly for the foreseeable future. At these meetings an update on staff and community wellbeing is our first agenda item. We have, sadly, lost members of our broader community during these challenging times.

Even before we were told to close, we have been working on how we will reopen, what we can offer and how we can make the reopening of school safe. We have also been working on how we sustain an excellent learning provision for all children whether they are at home, at school or a mixture of the two. We have also continually offered a school-based extended day provision for the children of key workers and other specific children.

Sometime ago, we arranged for an additional deep clean of our sites over "half term" in preparation for any government announcement which might coincide with the end of the "half term" break. The Prime Minister's announcement made last week, was that schools might be able to reopen from 1st June (i.e. the end of the half term) at the earliest. Government departments are now sending out almost daily advice which our teams read and seek to digest as well as following legal and health advice and guidance. The staff unions are also providing advice to ourselves and their members. Currently the advice from different sources and sometimes even the same source is contradictory and/or changes regularly. We will do our very best to interpret advice given and plan appropriately.

The Prime Minister has informed us that the possibility that schools will reopen from 1st June is dependent upon a review of the relevant scientific guidance to determine whether the government targets have been met. At this time, we do not know if the targets will be met or when the next stage towards schools reopening will be announced.

Before our schools reopen we will carry out thorough risk assessments of how we can do our best to ensure the safety of your children and our staff. As this is a pandemic, we will not be able to guarantee that your child or our staff will not come into contact with an infected person. However, we will take steps to minimise the risk of such contact. It is ultimately my responsibility at trust level and the heads' responsibility at school level to ensure we comply with all relevant health and safety guidance. The final decision on opening the schools will lie with the Trust. The final decision as to whether to send children to school will lie with parents and carers. As professionals our role will be to maximise the safety

of the children and staff, to minimise the risks and to provide you, staff and trustees with the relevant information.

While we cannot finalise organisational details at this time as new advice continues to be issued by the government, I can outline some ways that your child's school experience will be different from how it was prior to the pandemic.

Firstly, children will work in classes of a maximum of fifteen. I will refer to these as "teaching groups". Children will stay in the same teaching group through their time in school. Each teaching group will have an allocated member of staff and classroom. For some this will be the same room and/or the same teachers as before the closure. For others it will be a different room and/or different teacher than it was before the closure. The details of rooms and staffing will be a school-based decision and communicated directly from the school. We know that some of our staff team will not be able to return to work at this time as they are required to "shield" or for other reasons not to come to work. Staff members and parents are asked to seek medical advice as to whether it is safe for them or their children to return to school given their own and their families' specific health needs.

Play times and lunch times will no longer be whole-school or even whole-class events. The children will stay in their classroom as a group with their relevant member of staff. The start and the end of the day will also have to be different. Parents and carers will not be allowed to enter the school building. It may be that in some of our schools parents and carers will not be allowed onto the school site. Each school will inform you of the precise details. We will need to reduce the number of children and adults in or around the school at any one time. Thus each teaching group will be provided with specific times when their day will start and end. Parents will have to adhere to these times.

Once in school the children will have to follow new routines that involve less contact, less freedom and more hand washing and social distancing. Similarly, if anyone within a teaching group contracts the virus then the whole group will have to comply with isolation requirements.

As I write this I realise its content is not as positive as we would like it to be. I, like the vast majority of our community, would love a return to normality. Our number one priority is, and remains, your children and our staffs' wellbeing.

I can also tell you that whenever we are able to reopen, and whether your child attends school in person or virtually, our team will continue to provide the very best education we can for your children. I am immensely proud of what our team has produced during this terrible time. Our team has worked every day to provide your children with work and home learning. Many members of our team have worked every day (including holidays and weekends) throughout the lockdown to provide all of the children in the trust with suitable high quality work.

At present I cannot tell you, your children and our staff when your school will reopen. When we know more about the likely offer at your school you will be contacted again with specific details. We now await further government updates and advice. Once the government decides to provide approval for a date from which schools can return then we will write to you again explaining what we will be able to offer and for whom.

We are continuing and extending our home learning and key worker provision. These provisions will continue through the summer term. I do want to reassure all parents that whenever we are able to open or partially reopen school or whether your child attends in person or continues their learning at home, that the content and quality of the provision offered will be the same.

I hope you and your families remain fit and well. We will write to you again over the coming days when we have more information to share.

Yours,
John Grove