

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will be aware from your Head of School and the recent government announcements, schools are being asked to welcome back more pupils from **June 1<sup>st</sup> at the earliest**. Schools have been open for the last nine weeks for staff to support Key workers' children and those considered vulnerable. The Government is now asking that all primary schools open for children in Reception, Year 1 and Y6 if it is safe to do so.

We will continue to offer places to children of key workers and those vulnerable children from 1<sup>st</sup> June and we expect that the numbers in these groups will increase from that date. **The Trust Board are then looking at welcoming back other children from the 8<sup>th</sup> June.**

It is very important that we have prepared robust plans and risk assessments and that the school sites are prepared in line with the government guidance to cope with a significant increase in the number of people that will be on the school site. It is felt that carrying out a phased return will help us to achieve the safest environment for the whole school community.

Initial plans for re-opening were started after the first announcement was made by the government. However, schools have since been issued further guidance which has meant that we have had to re-consider how we can best manage the children coming back in to school in a way that it is safe for all children, families and staff. The government have given schools very specific guidance on how schools should manage the next stage. These include:

- Enhanced and thorough risk assessments
- Increased levels of cleaning and cleaning more often during the day of shared areas including toilets
- Soap and water available in each classroom and hand sanitiser throughout the school
- Small class groups of 15 with a teacher and a member of support staff. The youngest pupils are not expected to manage strict social distancing but it is the class 'bubble' that is protected from mixing with others
- The small class groups will not mix with any other class groups during the day
- Staggered starts and leaving times to support parents in maintaining social distancing whilst dropping and collecting children
- More outdoor learning opportunities

We will follow these guidelines in all of our schools and will do all we can to minimise risk but cannot guarantee that we can eliminate risk completely.

Each school is currently working on a detailed plan for opening for additional children in the safest way possible following government guidelines. These plans will be assessed and approved by the Trust Board. Once completed, these will be sent to parents.

Our planning has been based on the response that Heads of School have had from parents who have indicated that they would like to take up the offer to send their child back to school. We have also had to take into account the number of staff that we will have in school to make sure that we can meet the government guidance and keep the children in groups of fifteen. With this in mind we cannot guarantee that your child will be taught by their current class teacher or teaching assistant.

At this stage, it is important that we make parents aware that at the moment it is looking likely that we may not be able to have all of the specified year groups back into some of our schools if we are to adhere to the government guidelines. Our priority will have to be that we offer places to the children of key workers and vulnerable children. We will then look at what other places we can offer. Again, this will depend on staffing levels and different circumstances in each school. The decisions we make will be based entirely on being able to ensure the safety of all children and adults who will be coming onto the school site. It may be that what we can offer will be different in our schools and also to that which other local schools will be offering.

We are also well aware that it will be your choice as to whether you send your children to school or not and whether you feel what we are offering is safe enough. This is understandable and acceptable. Parents will not be penalised if they choose not send their children into school during this time.

If you are a key worker and think you will require a space for your child from 1<sup>st</sup> June, please contact your child's school to discuss your requirements. It is important that we are aware of numbers of children coming into school so that we have adequate staff in school to ensure that we can follow the government guidelines.

Finally, I think it is important that we are all aware that whilst we are planning to have more children back into school, how we move forward is all of course dependant on a final Government decision on the 28th May whether to open the schools more widely or not.

We will update all parents with final decisions and plans as soon as possible.

Regards

Mr R Barnard

Chair of The Robinswood Academy Trust

Mrs K Hoodless

Executive Headteacher