



The Consortium Trust

Where together excellence and pupils thrive

Covid-19 update for Parents and Carers

11th June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I am sure that you feel confused and concerned about what is happening in schools and more widely in society, I share this with you. While the announcements from government come thick and fast at the moment, there is very little substance and apparently no longer term strategic plan. You will have heard that the government have now abandoned their plans for all primary age pupils to return to school before the summer break. The Trust team including our phenomenal Academy Heads and school staff are doing everything possible to meet the educational needs of our pupils and your expectations.

Contrary to some statements in the media the education profession is not militant, we certainly are not shying away from our obligations as public servants and every single one of us in the Trust are working towards and looking forward to welcoming all our pupils back to school as soon as possible. For clarity information published by the government can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

As you may be aware the Academy Heads have carried out detailed risk assessments and these are being reviewed routinely against local circumstances, government and PHE advice and with our colleagues and the trade unions. It is essential that we carry the confidence of our staff but also you as parents that our schools are as safe as they can be. For most of our schools we are at capacity with the number of children that we can admit and while I understand that there is growing demand from parents to return children to school, we simply cannot go beyond what the guidelines permit us to do with the resources that we have.

I have made it clear that we want to welcome back all our pupils and we are working hard to increase capacity to meet the demand including:

- Procuring additional handwashing stations, PPE and equipment for our schools;
- Discussing lease agreements with village halls where space may be an issue;
- Reviewing staff structures, looking to increase hours of some staff where appropriate;
- Investing in digital platforms, the government only released details a few weeks ago;
- Supporting staff to return to work, investing in well-being and staff support;
- Working with our cleaning and catering contractors to improve service provision further;
- Reviewing our risk assessments to include more pupils where this is possible.

If you wish for your child to return to school please contact your school office and request a place. Be aware that you made need to go on a waiting list. There is an order of priority for places awarded, on a first come first served basis and when the class 'bubbles' are full you will be notified when a place becomes available.

I recognise that we have a large number of pupils remaining at home, we will continue to support and develop our home learning offer through our virtual school. The vast majority of our staff are now back working in our schools, so that we were still able to offer some online provision, we have worked with the very small number of teachers who remain at home to provide activities and ideas for home learning. Each virtual classroom has a teacher providing

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English and one providing Maths, other activities have also been made available from specialists, such as Art. Each teacher is now supporting approximately 300 pupils and they can, therefore, no longer offer a personalised service. As further changes and developments are announced by the government we will continue to adapt our practices, always with what is the best possible outcome for the pupils in mind.

As more pupils do re-join classes there will be questions from children. The following short animation explains some of the changes that they may see when they return to school, please show this to your child and discuss any issues that arise from it, school specific guidelines will be issued by your school:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLK3YjzS-rY&feature=youtu.be>

Our Trust was formed with a single objective to protect and promote exceptional education in our communities, we are a small Trust, we do not have huge resources at our disposal, and we work together as a family of schools. Supporting each other from Winterton to Rendlesham, Southwold to Hoxne and everywhere in between. I care for every school, colleague and pupil in our Trust – we are stronger working as a cooperative and all of our available resources are being used to support your children. I know what we are doing is not enough, I know we must strive to do more. We are developing the next phase of the return to education strategy and I will write again as soon as possible with an update.

On behalf of every member of staff I would like to thank parents and carers for their support and understanding at this challenging time for all of us. I came into this role to make things better for children, none of us in education should ever lose sight of that. Take care.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne
CEO & Principal

Cc: Trust Board and Members–
Locality Committee members