

Wednesday 20 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, I hope this letter finds you and your families well.

Following detailed government guidance last Thursday on the wider opening of schools, and following a meeting of our Trust Board on Monday, I am writing to outline our own plans for the Dixons Academies after the holiday. We are taking a deliberately cautious approach to start with, and will scale up our provision only when we have reassured ourselves that we are ready to do so.

From Monday 8 June, we plan to welcome back all pupils in Year 1. We have been advised to start with the younger pupils first, but believe that our new routines to keep everyone safe will be easier to establish and refine with slightly older children.

At some point from Monday 15 June, we plan to extend opening to children in Nursery, Reception and Year 6 children in line with government guidance. Final decisions on each year group will be taken nearer the time depending on the level of national social distancing and local rates of infection. These decisions will be taken on a Tuesday, and communicated to parents on the Wednesday before the Monday of their return.

The Department for Education will shortly issue guidance on further provision for Years 10 and 12. There is no clarity yet on plans for any other year groups.

We remain open for key worker children over the holiday, from Tuesday 26 to Friday 29 May. Our provision for key worker and vulnerable children from all year groups will continue unchanged after the holiday as well. If the family of any other child in any year group is unable to work and earn without childcare provision at school, please email the email address on the 'Contact' page of the academy's website for the attention of the Principal, and we shall get back in touch to discuss your situation.

From Monday 1 June, we shall be finalising arrangements on each site and training staff in small groups on the new routines and systems to keep everyone safe. While we recognise that social distancing with very young children is impossible throughout the day, we shall be organising staff and children into smaller "bubbles" to ensure there is no direct contact with anyone outside of their class of 15 and two staff members. They will have a single dedicated classroom and designated toilet and washing facilities.

Detailed risk assessments have been conducted, and the Executive, Principals and our Estates Team have been working to ensure that all necessary arrangements are in place and that all necessary equipment, for example scanner thermometers, is on site.

The choice is yours as to whether you choose to send your child back to school and we will respect your decision either way, but I hope that you will give it serious consideration. Of course, there are very vulnerable children and teachers and they must be protected in any wider return to school, as must similarly vulnerable household members.

Nevertheless, please recognise that we are taking a very cautious approach initially, that we will scale up our provision only when the time is right, and that we have planned in detail for everyone's safety. We know that children are much less severely affected by the disease, and that the closure of schools has few benefits to their health but very large costs, both to their wellbeing and to their education.

Yours sincerely



Sir Nick Weller
CEO

