

3rd January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,
Emergency INSET DAY 4th January 2021

You will be aware of very recent communications from the government about the re-opening of primary schools at the start of term on Monday 4th January.

The safety of everyone is paramount.

We have done absolutely everything we can to make our schools as safe as possible, but both the new strain of Covid 19 and the steep rise in infection rates locally and nationally, are very worrying for everyone. The Government's guidance for schools changes quickly, often with little notice to anyone and therefore this remains a challenging situation for all.

The biggest teaching and support staff unions have written to their members advising them that they should not return to work on Monday, as the workplace is unsafe.

Due to this continuing situation, we are not certain that we will have adequate staffing levels to re-open fully on Monday the 4th January. We have decided collectively therefore that primary schools in our Trust will be closed for an emergency INSET day on Monday 4th January 2021 to allow school leaders to assess the current situation and put plans in place for the safe re-opening of schools as soon as practically possible. This means the schools will remain closed for pupils on this date.

We appreciate that any lack of clarity for the future is deeply unhelpful and that closure on Monday may create difficulties for you. However, we can neither open nor operate with unsafe staffing levels and given how quickly the situation is moving, we will not be able to clarify these until Monday morning. We need to be confident that schools will have sufficient teachers, Teaching Assistants, dinner staff, administrative and cleaning staff to operate safely.

We will send out further information to you on Monday (early afternoon), as soon as we have clarified the situation and been able to make a plan for re-opening. This will involve working with school staff and Governors to update and agree the following:

- a) Refreshing the Risk Assessments for our school (considering the latest Tier 4 guidance, vulnerable staff and children)
- b) Confirm any arrangements required for remote learning and working, including for individuals shielding as a result of Tier 4 measures
- c) Confirm the list of children of critical workers and invite them to attend school
- d) Contact parents and carers of vulnerable children to confirm they are expected to attend
- e) Assess how soon the school can be opened to more children, other than those who are vulnerable and Key Worker families

Please accept our sincere apologies for any inconvenience and concern this may cause.

Yours sincerely,

Clare Fletcher (Acting CEO), Kendra Collier, Louise Norgate, Andrew Phoenix, Helen Plowman and Jo Read (Trust Headteachers and Executive Leadership Team)