Dear Families,

Thank you to everyone for your continued support during ‘lock down’. It has been an extremely challenging time for us all. We have all had different experiences some of which will have been difficult, but I hope that we have also had some happy memories of staying at home with loved ones.

During the last couple of months staff have worked very hard to stay in touch and connected with students which have included:

* Weekly phone calls
* Home working packs
* Individualised welfare resource packs
* ‘Beat the teacher’ challenge
* Staff video ‘Don’t worry because everything little thing gonna be alright’

We have loved staying connected via our social media. It has really helped us through lockdown so please keep posting.

Over the last few weeks leaders and staff have been busy planning for more students to come back to school where it will be safe to do so. The safety of our learners and staff is paramount.

The Government guidance (Actions for educational and childcare settings, 11th May 2020) states that special schools will:

*“work towards a phased return of more children without a focus on specific year groups…*

*for children with educational health and care plans this will be informed by a risk assessed approach”*

The Government guidance (supporting vulnerable children and young people during lockdown during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak – actions for educational providers and other partners, 15th May) states that special schools should:

*“consider a range of options to enable as many children as possible where it is safe and appropriate for them to do so, such as creating part-time attendance rotas”*

Taking account of Government Guidance, we have created a recovery plan based on 5 phases. We will only consider moving onto the next phase when we deem it safe to do so. Government have stated that there is high degree of confidence that the severity and susceptibility of the disease in younger children is low however there is not enough known about the severity and susceptibility in older children and that is why we are moving forward cautiously.   The phased wider opening of the Trust will be informed by Government Guidance, Local Authority guidance and more importantly the risk assessments that the Trust carries out on our students and therefore will be open to changes over time.

**Phase 1** is the current phase with the Academy being open to students of key workers. These students will continue to access the school during all phases.  During this phase, we are also conducting further risk assessments for students with high levels of additional health needs.  As part of this process staff will be in contact over the next two weeks to discuss your child.

**Phase 2** will look to welcome back Red Pathway students in Y10-14 who for some, will be leaving the school and sixth form.  This decision has been made as students in these classes are more able to follow social distancing measures.

**Phase 3** will look to welcome back Blue Pathway students in Y10-14. Additional measures will be in place for social distancing and for those that can’t minimising contact.

**Phase 4** will look to welcome back Red pathway students in Y7-9.

**Phase 5** will look to welcome back Blue pathway students in Y7-9.

During this half term students will come in 1 day a week in order that we can minimise contact.

**We are aiming to begin Phase 2 week commencing the 15th June 2020**.  Staff will be in touch with families of these students to carry out a survey of which families would like their child to come back to school.  Attendance is not compulsory, and parents/carers will not be penalised for not sending their child in.

It would not be appropriate at this time to give specific dates for when phases 3 to 5 will begin, however we will review the situation factoring in our school’s risk assessments, scientific evidence, local rate of infection and Local Authority and government guidance.  We will provide you with regular updates and the next review date will be the 15th June.

**Covid -19 Phased wider opening (Advice for parents/carers)**

Protective measures will be put in place for staff and students **as far as possible** to ensure the risk of transmission is **reduced**. We know that transmission of the disease happens through direct (coughing, sneezing) and indirect (touching surfaces) transmission.

Minimise contact:

* Classes will be split into zones and there will only be one class in each zone at any one time.  This will allow classes to be split to minimise contact further.
* Where possible there will be separate entrances and exits to each zone.
* Students will have access to an identified toilet and hand washing facilities within their zone and where possible their own outdoor space.  For access to larger outdoor spaces there will be staggered times for use.
* Students and staff will eat in their own zone.
* Students will have access to their own resources.  Any shared resources will be cleaned before someone else uses them.
* No visitors including parents will be allowed into the building without prior approval from the Head Teacher/Senior Leadership Team.
* For some student's, risk assessments may mean that staff will need to wear protective clothing (this will be discussed with families).

Socially distancing:

* Where possible social distancing measures will be put in place and classrooms will be adjusted to enable this, however we know that for the vast majority of our students this will be very difficult.

Cleaning

* There will be increased cleaning including regular washing down of surfaces including tables, chairs, handles, light switches etc.

Hand and respiratory hygiene

* All students will be asked to clean hands frequently throughout the day including entry to the school, before and after eating and before leaving the school.
* Students who find hand washing difficult will be engaged in activities that involve soapy water play.
* Students will be taught to use tissues when coughing and sneezing and to place these in a lidded bin.

Curriculum:

* The curriculum for students attending school this half term will be different to the normal curriculum and will focus on emotional and physical well-being.
* Outdoor spaces will be used as much as possible.
* There will be no offsite activities.
* Teachers will continue to provide work for those that remain at home.

Transport

* We encourage parents to bring their child into school where they can as there will be reduced capacity on the buses due to social distancing measures being put in place.
* Students will be greeted by their staff on a morning and taken to their zone.
* We recommend not using public transport as per Government guidance.

Other important information:

* Students who are shielding or live with someone who is shielding must remain at home.
* If your child or a member of your household, shows any symptoms they must not attend school or college and must isolate at home in line with Government guidelines.
* Testing is available for staff and students that show symptoms through a self-referral system.
* Students at home should be following socially distancing measures with their families and not engaging in wider social interactions in line with Government guidelines.
* It is very important that we have an up to date contact number and that you are contactable during the day.

If you have any further questions please raise these during your weekly catch up call with your child’s teacher or alternatively you can phone the school.

Kindest Regards



Mrs L. Greig

(Interim CEO)