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28th May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope this letter finds you and your family safe and well.

I write to give you a further update on our plans to support the wider opening of our Trust primary phase provision, subject to government plans on the wider reopening of schools being unchanged following their late review of the conditionality of this.

Extensive hard work has been going on behind the scenes to prepare for the wider reopening of our schools in line with the extensive and constantly evolving government guidance. As you know, we have always been clear that health and safety would determine the approach we take to the wider opening of our schools and the form that this will take in individual institutions.

In light of our work to date, it has become apparent that further time is needed to prepare our school sites and this, combined with the current uncertainty around staffing and likely student numbers, means we have taken the decision to delay the wider opening of all our primary provision until Thursday 4th June. This additional time, beyond the previously communicated start date of 2nd June, is to enable us to complete our preparations of the school site, to induct our staff in new ways of working and to ensure that we are better able to plan for the safer wider opening for our schools. I apologise for the late notice of this change and for the delay that our year groups will experience as we revise the date of the roll out of our extended provision but we must prioritise health and safety in all our work and planning.

Your individual Headteacher will be writing to you to inform you of the revised plans for their school. Please be assured that they are doing all that they can to ensure that our schools open as widely as possible and as quickly as possible within the strict safety parameters we have established. Our Headteacher colleagues and staff in schools and the Trust have been working incredibly hard to support the wider opening of schools since the government announcement on this. Our Trust schools, like those across the city and the country, have an immense job at hand to adapt their premises and ways of working to meet the new guidance relating to health and safety.

The limited staffing and teaching rooms available in small village schools creates unique difficulties in both establishing and maintaining our wider reopening where class sizes are at least halved. This pressure on staffing capacity is exacerbated by the need to minimise the use of supply staff, where possible, and also due to the very limited availability of supply staff at present. As I have mentioned previously, this means that there may be ongoing points where we need to amend, potentially at short notice, the provision that our schools can offer. Our Headteachers will liaise closely with you should this occur and will give you as much notice as possible should any change to our provision be needed. Please be assured we will seek to maintain the extended provision we will start to offer wherever possible.

I appreciate that schools across the city and the country are adopting different approaches to the wider opening of schools. While this may be difficult for parents, pupils and staff to understand, this differing approach reflects the individual circumstances of each provider. Any health and safety assessment and plans for wider reopening must be based on the context, and meet the needs, of the individual school.

Please be assured that we wish to welcome all our students back to school as soon as we are able to do so. We will, however, do this in a cautious, prudent manner where the safety of all in our community will govern the timing and nature of our actions.

Thank you for your understanding and support in this.

Yours faithfully,



Lorna Savage  
Trust CEO