

DHO/NBA

1st June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

First of all, I would like to thank you once again for your support during this difficult period. The learning which continues to be shared online is inspirational and demonstrates the strength of our community's collective determination to get through this period of adversity.

In the next couple of weeks, we will be starting to take the first small step towards returning to something like normal schooling. This is another period where your support and understanding will be vital as some of our children are welcomed back into our Academies. School will look very different for the children on their return and we will be enforcing strict guidelines across our school sites with regards to behaviour, social distancing and what can actually be brought into the school.

The Principal will be writing to you in the next week with more detailed guidance and to outline the expectations for the children on their return to the Academy; I would ask that you adhere to what is put in place. All the measures that are being implemented are based on the latest government guidance and are for the protection of everyone. We will be asking all parents/carers whose children are returning to school, including keyworker children, to sign a revised version of the Home-Academy Agreement – this sets out what can be expected of all parties during this period.

As explained previously, we will be taking a careful, staged approach to reopening our schools. In the first instance, from Monday 15th June, our schools will expand beyond the existing keyworker provision to admit some of the younger children. To achieve this, children in Foundation 2 initially, then later year one, will be welcomed back in in two halves, Cohort 1 and Cohort 2. Your child or children will be allocated one of these cohorts. Cohort 1 children will attend on Mondays and Tuesdays, Cohort 2 children on Thursdays and Fridays. Our sites will be closed on Wednesdays for all children except those of key workers for deep cleaning. The schedule for opening will progress as follows:

- June 15th/16th Cohort 1 FS2 Children
- June 18th/19th Cohort 2 FS2 Children
- June 22nd/23rd Cohort 1 Y1 and FS2 Children
- June 25th/26th Cohort 2 Y1 and FS2 Children

In addition, your child will be allocated a small teaching 'bubble' in a teaching space, which will most likely not be in their normal classroom or with their regular teacher. The Principal will send details of which 'bubble' your child has been allocated to, and who the staff teaching them will be – the allocated teaching staff will not change through this period of time. Group or 'bubble' sizes have been kept to a maximum of 8 pupils in order to maintain social distancing. It should be noted that our key worker provision will remain full time. We will also be operating a system of staggered start times. Each 'bubble' group will be given a specific time to be brought into and collected from school. Again, the Principal will write to you in the next week with further details.

We have worked hard to make sure that our Academies have high standards of hygiene, good supplies of hand washing resources and robust systems in place. In order to help us control any possible sources of infection, we would ask that you follow the guidance provided by the Academy Principal.

We will do our very best to make this period as 'normal' as possible for your children. It is inevitable that the return to school will create some anxiety – it will look very different to how it was when they left. However, our dedicated staff teams will work hard to create a positive atmosphere and make the time as fruitful and enjoyable as possible for them. I know that I have set out some very clear expectations and rules for our sites – this is in place to keep us all safe and ensure that we are in a position to open our sites to more students when the time allows. I have included a FAQs section at the bottom of this letter which I hope will answer specific queries. We will place links to this on our school websites and address any further questions as they arise. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mr Horrigan
Executive Principal (Primary)

Wider Opening of MLT Academies - FAQs

What time will my child be expected to arrive at school and be collected from school?

We will be operating a system of staggered start and end times for different 'bubbles' of children. The Academy Principal will write to you with exact start and end times for your child.

How will I access the school site?

All our Academies are operating one-way systems for parents and pupils in the mornings and afternoons. The Academy Principal will communicate details of this. We ask that all parents abide by this – it will mean walking further, but our relatively narrow walkways make two-way traffic impossible at this time whilst maintaining social distancing. Parents not abiding by the guidelines may be asked to leave the academy site.

What if my child has been attending the keyworker provision? Can they join their year group when they start?

Your child will be able to move once from the full-time key worker provision into a part time 'bubble'. However, once they have attended as part of a bubble group, they will not be able to move back and will only be able to attend on their allocated days– children will not be able to switch between the two.

I have a child in F2 and Year 1, will they have the same drop off times?

We will do our best to make sure drop off times are the same for siblings but, because of the complexity of what we are organising, we cannot guarantee it.

Will my child be wearing school uniform?

We have decided that children will wear school uniform, however, they will be expected to come in clean uniform every day to prevent contamination – children with stained/dirty uniform will be sent home.

Will my child be taught by their normal teacher in their normal classroom?

Probably not. Because teaching groups will be much smaller, we are using teachers and teaching assistants from across the school in each year group. We are also using most of the teaching spaces in the school, not just the year group classrooms.

Where will I drop my child off and pick them up?

The Academy Principal will communicate this for your child's specific bubble. All sites have been clearly signposted and marked to help you know where to go.

Who can bring my child in to school?

We would ask that only one adult accompanies each family. We understand you might need to bring children not accessing school with you but please keep these children with you and do not allow them to touch fixed play equipment or run around.

What can my child bring into school?

We would ask that children only bring themselves into school and nothing else other than essential medical equipment (e.g. inhalers etc). No bags, coats, pencil cases, toys or packed lunches are to be brought into school. Your child will be able to bring a sunhat, but this should be washed regularly.

What is my child doesn't want to leave me at the start of the day?

As teachers, we would normally do whatever we can to help you in this situation. However, in the current situation, staff will have to keep a 2m distance from you and your child. Ultimately, you will have to decide what to do in this situation.

What will my child use to write with?

You child will be provided with a pack of equipment which will include everything they need. Their bubble will also have some shared resources, these will be cleaned regularly and kept between the 8 children in their group.

My child has a packed lunch, what will they do?

All the children being readmitted to school are entitled to a free school lunch. We will be providing all children with a school packed lunch every day with a choice of sandwiches.

Where will my child eat their lunch?

Children's lunches will be brought to their 'bubble' they will eat with the children in their bubble in the teaching space or in a designated outdoor area.

What have you done to ensure social distancing?

Obviously, we know that social distancing with very young children is hard. We have kept group sizes as small as possible and ensured that all children have approximately 3-4m² of space in the classroom. In addition, all the corridor spaces and communal areas have been marked with 2m distancing signage. Staff will do their best to maintain distances between children and between children and themselves and will regularly remind children of the rules.

What if a child deliberately breaks social distancing rules?

We have revised our behaviour policies to reflect the current situation. You will be able to download these from academy websites. As set out in the home-school agreement, the behaviour policy will be used as needed to reinforce social distancing – if a child deliberately and repeatedly fails to follow instruction we will have to think of the safety of the staff and other pupils and will send them home.

What have you done to reinforce hand hygiene?

All teaching spaces, first aid stations, toilets and entrances have been supplied with soap, paper towels and hand sanitiser. We have also purchased lidded peddle bins for all these areas. Children will be asked to use soap and hand sanitiser whenever they move around the school. We have also purchased stocks of tissues for coughs and sneezes – again these must be binned. Signage is up all around school to remind children of this.

What about breaks and lunch time play?

Children will have staggered breaks and lunchtimes. They will play in their bubble group in a designated area of playground. Children will not be allowed to socialise with their friends from other bubbles.

It is summer, what about sun cream?

If your child is able to apply their own sun cream, they will be able to bring their own supply into school as long as it goes home every day. They must not share this with anyone else and adults will be unable to help them apply it.

What if my child falls over and hurts themselves?

Staff will not be able to pick your child up as they would love to do. However, we will have stocks of PPE to enable basic first aid to take place where this is needed.

My child has additional medical needs, what about them?

Any child with additional medical needs who can't administer their own medication or needs staff intervention will need their Health Care Plan revisiting before they are admitted. The academy will be in touch about this.

Will I be able to access the Academy building to speak to a teacher or the Principal?

In order to maintain social distancing, you will not be able to enter the school buildings unless you have a pre-arranged appointment. If you want to speak to your child's bubble teacher or any other member of staff, please phone school or email and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

What if I'm late for my child's start time?

Once bubbles have started, we will not allow children to join them from the collection point. This means that late children will have to be home educated that day.

Will breakfast clubs be running?

No, we are unable to maintain social distancing in these areas, we will let you know when we can start them again.

What if I need to pick my child up during the day?

Each academy will have systems in place for this. You will not enter the building but will pick them up from a designated collection point –the Academy Principal will communicate this with you.

What will learning look like?

Learning will be based more at desks than many of the younger children might be used to. Initially we will concentrate on wellbeing and helping the children get used to being back in school, then we will focus on basic skills, like reading.

What about moving round school?

Movement around the school for the children will be minimised. If they do move around it will be in their bubble group with their allocated staff. Many areas of the inside of school will be out of bounds for children and most movement will be outside to help social distancing to be maintained.

What if my child has a toileting accident at school?

We have allocated places for intimate care in school and we will care for your child as we normally would. However, staff will be wearing PPE at these times, including face masks.

What if my child is ill in school?

If your child is poorly in school, we will look after them, although staff will maintain social distances and wear PPE. If your child shows Covid-19 related symptoms, staff will have to place them in a designated isolation area, and you will be asked to collect them promptly. You will then be asked to book a covid-19 test for your child and to share the results with the academy as soon as possible. Your child will be asked to self-isolate and will not be allowed back into school until a negative test is confirmed.

What if my child or another child in their bubble group tests positive?

In this case, all children in the bubble, their siblings and the allocated staff will be sent home immediately and asked to self-isolate until they can arrange a test. The classroom and all the equipment in it will be deep cleaned before it is used again.