



Oak Multi Academy Trust

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CEO: Mr Stephen Mitchell

22 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Our plans for widening provision

I hope this letter finds you and your families keeping well. I know the last few months have been extremely challenging for everyone, and that within our school communities there will have been some real heartache, and my thoughts and best wishes extend to you all.

Our schools have all remained open during the 'lockdown' period to vulnerable children and children of keyworkers. This support has been a success, with children enjoying school, and each school operating safely, and with no cases of the virus breaking out in our school communities.

The Government is asking us to prepare to widen access to include Reception, Y1, Y6, and Y10, potentially with effect from 1 June. You'll be aware of the significant media coverage around this, and the rapidity at which information we're working with changes. This letter is written today, on the basis of the information that we have available at 2.30pm on Friday 22nd May. I am sending this letter to all families within our schools, so that you have full information about our current plans. I recognise that many families will not have children in the year groups which are potentially returning, but, in the spirit of transparency, wanted to share our plans with you all, so that we have equity of information.

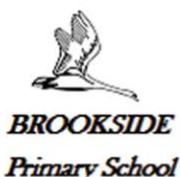
The Government haven't yet declared whether they believe their 5 tests for widening school provision have been met, and dependent upon that, our decision as to the dates at which we will move forward with the attached plans will be made. We will communicate this with you **in due course**, and I will do so as quickly as I can.

Each school has built their own plans for widening access on the same principles that have been used across the Trust, but, given each individual school's context there are some variations in how these plans operate. Central to our approach though has been the promises that I made in my last letter to you:

- **Safety comes first.** We are a people organisation, and ensuring everyone's safety will be our priority
- We will fully **share our plans**, and listen to your feedback and comments
- We will **do what is right for our communities**. Schools are a rich part of the fabric of our communities, and we serve you.

To achieve this, we have set plans on the following basis:

- We encourage appropriate social distancing at all times, where possible*
- Avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- Frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- Regular cleaning of settings
- Minimising contact and mixing.
- Staggered start and finish times





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Government guidance notes that that this may not be possible at all times in schools, particularly in primaries, where keeping young children 2m apart at all times is unlikely, but class sizes are capped at 15, and in many cases we have capped them at lower than this, based upon space available in rooms and working on a 2m gap.

In the spirit of complete transparency, I will not say that we can provide an environment where all risks are eliminated, but I can't do that in a 'normal' school environment either. What we have done, through these plans, is to create an environment where risks are managed to a level that we feel is appropriate, and is in line with guidance, and what we're being asked to deliver.

We are going to achieve this by creating 'protective bubbles' around groups of children, as much as possible. This is easier in primary than in secondary, where students take different subjects, but we have planned to keep 'bubbles' of students together as much as possible. These bubbles will mean that groups of children will be kept together for the whole school today, with the same staff supporting them. In secondary, movement will depend upon the subjects students study, where possible teachers will move to the group of students.

Food will continue to be available, but will be eaten in classrooms.

We have shared these plans with our colleagues, and with Trade Union, and continue discussions with both groups to ensure that we are liaising fully, and collating and acting upon feedback.

Specific details in relation to your child's school is shown on the attached pages. We will be sharing our Risk Assessments next week too via our website www.oaktrust.org/covid, which I encourage you to review.

With my very best wishes, and I will write again to you when we have taken our decision about our next steps, in light of the government decision.

Stephen Mitchell

Chief Executive Officer

