

Wednesday 27th May 2020

Dear Parents & Carers,

Can I firstly thank you all so much for the support many of you have shown our school staff during this time, your kind comments and words have meant a great deal to our staff who continue to show such care, determination and kindness.

I met with our Trust Board yesterday afternoon to agree the next phase of re-opening our schools to additional year groups. I know that all of our schools have been in contact with families recently, giving you as much information as we could in advance of this meeting. We are now in a position to confirm arrangements and dates.

At the meeting we looked very carefully at the Risk Assessments that each school has completed and the plans for re-opening which have to detail clearly the ways that our schools will reduce the risk of COVID 19 for the pupils and staff.

There are 5 key ways that our schools will do this:

- Control transmission of the disease: minimising contact with children and adults who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.
- Management and control through personal hygiene: cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered.
- Ensuring good respiratory hygiene: promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- Enhanced cleaning regimes: cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach.
- Minimising contact and mixing: changing, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables (such as staggered break times).

I have been very clear during this crisis that my number one priority is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your children, your families and our employees. There are other priorities which are extremely important, but in my mind safety will always come first.

My job has been to present to Trustees, in a fair manner, all of the available guidance and information in order that they can make the most informed decision possible regarding re-opening plans. These are plans which reduce risk to the minimum for our school communities. I have taken into account advice and guidance from the





Department for Education, recently published scientific guidance from the SAGE Group and wider scientific advice from The Independent SAGE Group.

I am pleased to confirm that Trustees approved the re-opening of trust schools to additional year groups from the week beginning **Monday 15th June**.

Key to this decision is the fact that this further two-week period from June 1st will give valuable time for the very low risk of infection to further reduce significantly and allow time for strong local testing procedures to be established so that Track Trace & Isolate arrangements are in place before larger volumes of children return to our schools.

Your child's school will be writing to you today giving you school level detail about arrangements and year groups. I cannot stress enough how carefully this planning has been done and praise our school leaders for the way they continue to manage this situation with safety and wellbeing at the forefront.

Going forwards I will be chairing a weekly COVID 19 Trust Risk Meeting reviewing arrangements in school and refining how we can best move forwards to the time when all of our pupils are back in school. I mentioned in an earlier letter to you that school will look quite different for those children initially coming back, stressing that the decision to return before September rests with you as parents and carers. Your view will be respected and listened to.

I am sure your levels of confidence will increase over time and by taking a careful, phased approach to this you can see that we are re-opening in the safest way possible.

Stay safe and well.

Yours sincerely



Nick Blackburn
Chief Executive
Lingfield Education Trust