



Harmony Trust Further Update Regarding Wider Opening of Academies from September

Tuesday 14th July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to provide you with further information following a meeting with our Board of Trustees last week.

In line with Government guidance all our academies will open for all children in September. We are very pleased with this development and look forward to seeing all our children back in school. Obviously, this represents a significant increase in the number of children and adults who will be in school on a daily basis. We'd like to reassure you that we are taking every possible precaution to keep staff and children safe. Inevitably, this will result in some organisational changes for example, in terms of moving around the academy and procedures for entering and leaving the building. Children will be taught in class bubbles which means there will be a staggering of activities throughout the day to minimise the number of interactions for both staff and children. After much consideration and discussion with the Trustees we've decided to introduce three changes for the Autumn Term in order to minimise the risk of infection.

Pre-opening Preparation and Training

Some of our academies are revising the holiday pattern slightly which will mean, in some cases, that the first day back in September is a day later than previously communicated. This is to ensure that there is sufficient time for staff to put in place new procedures and become familiar with the new organisational arrangements to minimise contact. If this were to happen in your child's academy, the day that has been lost will be given back at a later point in the school year.

Preparation, Planning and Assessment Time for Teachers (PPA)

Normally, teachers have time out of class for PPA on a weekly basis. This is covered by either other members of staff or supply staff. Given that it's very important to minimise the number of adults working in any class bubble, we've decided the best way to achieve this is to close each academy for half a day a week during the Autumn term. Our experience to date of working under the required restrictions is that we have had to close bubbles several times at short notice when someone reported a cough or cold. In each case, the symptomatic individual was tested for Covid-19 and only one test result was positive. We realise there is some inconvenience in the half day closure but we believe that it is the best way forward to minimise the risk of infection and the need for multiple short notice closure of bubbles which can be very disruptive for parents. We will keep this decision under review so that we can monitor any patterns of infections once we have all the children and staff back in the academy.

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Breakfast and After School Clubs

In the vast majority of cases these will not be available immediately. This is because it would mean that children and staff would be part of different bubbles at different times of the day which could lead to a higher number of children and staff having to go home if anyone had any symptoms. This will be kept under review as the term goes on.

Next Steps

Your principal will be sending out a letter in the next few days with details of the opening date in September and which afternoon the academy will be closed. They will also include any information about before and after school clubs.

We hope you understand the reasons for these decisions as part of our re-opening procedures. We wanted to let you know about these changes now so that you can make any arrangements you need to take account of them.

Thank you for your continued support and patience. We look forward to welcoming you back in September.

Yours sincerely

Antony Hughes
CEO The Harmony Trust