



Friday 16th October 2020

Dear Parents and carers,

Update on PPA Closure arrangements

I am writing to provide an important update in relation to Covid19 and our measures to reduce infection to protect our staff, children and their families. In June, our Board of Trustees took the decision to close all our academies earlier on one day per week to pupils so that we could effectively facilitate statutory Planning, Preparation and Assessment time (PPA) for teachers. At that time we committed to a review of this decision at October half term and so I am writing to inform you of the outcome of that review and to provide you with the context in which the decision has been taken.

Following a review report and recommendations paper **the Board of Trustees has taken the decision to continue with the PPA closure policy until the end of the Autumn Term** at which point there will be further review.

Trustees made this decision primarily because of the evidence that **infection rates have risen sharply in all areas**. Oldham, Derby and Tameside are all now classified as high-risk areas. As the initial decision was taken based on the safety of children and staff trustees recognise that this must continue to be our highest priority.

Why is the academy closing early?

To protect our staff, children and families we are trying to limit the numbers of staff interacting across bubbles so for a short period have changed how we provide statutory PPA. All full-time children will continue to receive at least 25 hours learning time during the week. We have managed this by changing the organisation of the day including lunchtime arrangements. This early closure for pupils allows staff to have their PPA time and carry out essential work which supports the Quality of Education in our academies.

Before Covid, PPA Teachers and Higher Level Teaching assistants would teach the class to cover PPA time. If we continued in this way it would mean that we would have multiple staff covering classes and crossing bubbles. This would mean that if one person tested positive for Covid 19 we would have to close Year groups and possibly the whole academy for 14 days. By closing early we have a better chance of keeping our bubbles and our academies open. This is hopefully a short term measure and the arrangement will be reviewed regularly.

We have already managed 23 bubble closures effectively since September, this would have been significantly higher had staff worked across bubbles. More children and more learning time would have been lost as direct result of increased closures. We know that other schools, Multi-Academy Trusts and Local Authorities are seeing this as a key challenge.

Although this may be difficult for some families it is currently our best option for keeping our academies open as much as we can. If you have any specific queries or have particular challenges regarding childcare, please get in touch with the academy via email and a member of the team will get back to you.

Thank you for your continued support at what remains a challenging time.

Mr Antony Hughes
CEO