



1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

## Creating Tomorrow COVID-19 Update

Dear families,

I hope that you are all well as we head into June and the summer months.

As a trust we wanted to keep you informed on what we are doing in order to open our schools wider, thank to all of you who have returned the parent surveys to your headteacher - these are an important part of our recovery planning. If you haven't yet returned yours, and want your views heard, please return your survey as soon as possible as we move into the next phase of our planning.

I am aware that a few families contacted schools over the half term break to ask if their child was returning to school today (1<sup>st</sup> June). I am sorry that the government guidelines and subsequent reporting in the press has not been clear about special schools - unlike mainstream schools we are **NOT** opening to specific year groups.

Special schools have been asked by the government to plan for welcoming more students back before the end of July. From the 1<sup>st</sup> June we have been asked to start to risk assess and plan for when it is safe to bring more students back to school, and **only when it is safe to do so**. The government updated its guidance to special schools last Thursday night (May 28<sup>th</sup>) and we have now been asked to complete a risk assessment for each student in our schools, and therefore school staff will be in touch to discuss this further.

We have now had an initial meeting with representatives of all stakeholders of the schools, including parent reps, and this group will continue to meet to look at next steps. Our board of trustees has to agree to extending provision further and before they can do this they need to see that the schools have carefully planned, taking into consideration the needs of our students, availability of staff and wishes of parents.

I would like to re-iterate that the government has been clear that school leaders, in consultation with the local authority, will make the decision when it is safe for the gradual increase in numbers, however if parents do not wish to send their child back at this point in time there are no penalties.

On another note, prior to lockdown each of the schools had sent out letters to consult on changing the school term dates. This was to provide a 2 week October half-term break with the aim of shortening the long autumn term (adding this week onto the summer term) thereby reducing sickness and improving wellbeing. Decisions on term dates rest with your school's local governing body (LGB) and the schools were in different stages of the consultation process, for example, Daventry Hill LGB had analysed all the feedback and based on this passed an agreement in principle to change the term dates.

However, we are acutely aware that a large number of families have been put under financial strain due to the COVID-19 pandemic (being furloughed or made redundant) or have been required to take additional holiday. Therefore all 3 schools have agreed that there will be **NO** change to the 2020-2021 term dates, and the schools will communicate their decisions regarding 2021-22 term dates.

Once again, as we have said throughout the pandemic, our primary focus is the safety and wellbeing of your child and our staff, and so all decisions will be based on this ethos.

Please look after yourselves and your loved ones

Yours faithfully

Handwritten signature of Kevin Latham, consisting of the letters 'K' and 'A' in a cursive style.

Kevin Latham

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