

LINK ACADEMY TRUST

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Tuesday 14th July 2020

September Full School Opening

Dear parents and carers,

We are so pleased to be welcoming all children back into our schools in September and would once again like to thank you for the support you have shown us over the very tricky months since March.

All Link Academy Trust Schools will open to pupils on Monday 7th September. Staff will be in school the week before and full time on Thursday 3rd and Friday 4th September when they will be undergoing training and preparing for pupils return.

The Government assure us that 'the risk to children themselves becoming severely ill from coronavirus is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school' and 'the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children returning to school'.

It is mandatory that children return to school. This is because it is vital that our children return to minimise as far as possible the impact of the pandemic; they need to catch up on missed education, make progress and promote their wellbeing and wider development.

There will be a number of adjustments we will continue to have to make and you may well be asked to bring your children to school for a specific start time as we continue to work in 'bubbles', albeit larger ones, often with staggered start times.

You will continue to be asked to drop your child to school on time and leave the premises immediately, please do not congregate at the school gate. If you need to speak to the office, where at all possible please do so by phone or book an appointment as we continue to observe adult social distancing as much as we possibly can to keep our children safe.

The Government have set out a system of controls for September that schools must adhere to, they are grouped into 'prevention' and 'response to any infection' and are outlined in more detail below

Prevention:

- 1) minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school
- 2) clean hands thoroughly more often than usual
- 3) ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- 4) introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach
- 5) minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible
- 6) where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

Numbers 1 to 4 must be in place in all schools, all the time.

Number 5 must be properly considered, and schools must put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances.

Number 6 applies in specific circumstances.

Response to any infection:

- 7) engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
 - 8) manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community
 - 9) contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice
- Numbers 7 to 9 must be followed in every case where they are relevant.

All our Academies have been through a detailed checklist produced from the Government Guidance and have re-assessed and updated our current in-depth Risk Assessments. These have been and will continue to be monitored and scrutinised by Trustees to ensure they are robust and rigorous. Arrangements to meet all the System of Controls will be in full place for September. Parents may ask their Academy Head to see a copy of these in September when any adjustments to possible ongoing Government changes have concluded.

Adjustments to the current arrangements as outlined in the latest guidance include:

- There will continue to be no large group gatherings for assemblies, choirs etc
- Where possible children will sit facing forwards and/ or side by side.
- We will use the outdoors as much as possible and all classrooms will be well ventilated with windows safely open.
- Classes will operate as bubbles wherever this is possible, they will be much bigger in numbers and no longer restricted to 15 pupils but will occupy one space throughout the day.
- There will be, as far as possible, limited sharing of communal space.
- Where we can make suitable arrangements, we will open our schools for wrap-around care, breakfast club and after-school club.
- Staff and adults will continue to socially distance where this is possible.
- Class-based resources will be re-introduced to support the highest quality learning and will be cleaned regularly or left for 72 hours, before being used by another group.
- Fire Drills will be completed early in the term.
- Kitchens will be fully open and will provide meals to all that want them.
- No overnight residential visits may take place but schools can resume non-overnight domestic education visits.
- We will reduce the risk when groups of children are singing, playing wind instruments or shouting by limiting the group size to a maximum of 15 or working outside where possible
- Contact sports will be avoided

We will also be expected to plan for the possibility of a local lockdown, in particular how we can ensure continuity of high quality education. We therefore intend to continue to develop integrated remote education and will be planning to deliver this even more effectively with feedback that will ensure pupils continue to make good or better progress. We will have in place a contingency plan if this were to happen.

The Link Academy Trust will always try to provide the very best and safest education for all our children, so you may find the arrangements in your particular academy might need to be slightly adjusted. The Academy Head will be writing to you all to let you know the particular requirements of their school.

Once again thank you for your support in these difficult times. I hope you all have an excellent summer with plenty of sunshine to enable you to enjoy the great outdoors. Hopefully in September we will all come back with renewed vigor to enjoy the excitement of seeing our friends and teachers with the desire to really build our learning skills. Have a super family break!

Kind regards,
Nicky

CEO, The Link Academy Trust

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