



22 May 2020

Dear Parent / Carer,

As you are aware from my previous communication academies within the Brigantia Learning Trust are being asked by the government to prepare to open more widely sometime after the half term break and I thought you would be keen to know more about our planning for when this stage arrives.

These are extraordinarily difficult times and as a Trust we are being asked to make some of the most important decisions we will ever take. Throughout this process some will agree with our decisions and some won't and that is absolutely fine. What I can absolutely assure you of is that we will continue to be honest and open with you and try to share as much information as we can about what we are doing and, crucially, why we are doing it. The safety of pupils, students and staff remain our greatest priority.

I am writing to you today to provide the next update on what our academies will look like at some point after half term. Our job is still to plan for how we can start to take more students back in a way that allows us to reduce risks as much as we can. Throughout the last week we have been planning how to deliver on the government's hope of opening academies for Nursery pupils, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 in addition to year 10 and year 12. The responses to the parents' questionnaire in our primary and secondary phases have been greatly appreciated in relation to our planning and risk assessments. It is very important to say that the government's decision on whether they expect this to happen will not be announced until Thursday 28 May and as a result of this we will not be opening more widely **until 8 June 2020** at the earliest.

We are currently undertaking work on assessing risk in the academies and putting measures in place to further reduce this risk.

In our primary academies we intend to open on a daily basis for all pupils for a maximum of three hours per day (a three-hour morning session or a three-hour afternoon session) limiting groups sizes to a maximum of 10 pupils per group. Each group will only be taught by a single teacher throughout the next phase of opening creating a what is being termed a 'social bubble'. Teaching support staff will be assigned to these 'social bubbles' also. The rationale for this mode of operation is so that we can meet all of the social distance guidance currently published by the government, ensure we meet with the designated year groups on a daily basis so that we can continue to check regularly on their wellbeing and mental health and in addition provide the opportunity for all these groups of pupils to receive a meal should they wish to receive one from the academy. Nursery pupils will be able to access learning for two morning sessions or two afternoon sessions per week. When the decision to return comes these plans will be phased in gradually over a period of a week.

Detailed plans for Year 10 and 12 are not yet finalised as government guidance has yet to be released to aid us with this planning process. Once we receive this guidance we will contact you with further details but in the meantime the academy site facility teams are ensuring the buildings are fit to open.

Chair: David Drayson

Directors: Kevin Clifford
Lisa Mitcheson
Mary Pepper
Jane Robinson
Nicola Shipman
Alison Warner

Chief Executive Officer: Mike Westerdale

Brigantia Learning Trust
A company limited by guarantee

Registered in England No. 8506178

Registered Office:
Hinde House 3-16 School
Shiregreen Lane
Sheffield S5 6AG

An exempt charity



BRIGANTIA
LEARNING TRUST

Creating excellence together

Trust Office
C/O Yewlands Academy
Creswick Lane
Sheffield S35 8NN

Tel: 0114 232 9010

E-mail: enquiries@brigantiastrust.net

Website: www.brigantiastrust.net

Although responsibility for decisions around academies opening sits with the trust rather than the local authority, I would like to assure you we have been working extremely closely with the city council throughout the crisis.

Therefore, after significant careful deliberation, The Board of Trustees at Brigantia Learning Trust has deferred the implementation of any wider opening until at least the **8th June 2020** even if the government announcement made is for the phased return to commence from 1st June. We will be using this time to finalise our plans and preparations in light of any updated government guidance and Public Health advice. We have reviewed this position, along with all available information we have sought from Public Health England, the local authority and national organisations that support schools.

Following the half term break the pupils and students who have been using the Brigantia Learning Hub for the past few weeks (e.g. pupils and students from parents who are critical key workers) will continued to be welcomed back to their home academy (Wincobank, Concord, Hinde House, Yewlands or Longley Park Sixth Form) from 8:30am – 3pm each day. (Please note Year 5/6 pupils from Hinde House Academy should report to the Hinde House Secondary site.)

Additionally, our work through the online learning platforms will continue after half term and we remain here to answer any questions or offer any support we can through the Trust Action line actionline@brigantiastrust.net or by telephoning 0114 232 9017.

Please do get in touch with the Trust if you have questions or queries of any kind and I reiterate once again that the Trust is committed in its approach to only open up more widely for more pupils and students if the Trust/Academy leaders but ultimately the Trustees are confident risk has been minimised and the sites and learning environments are as safe as possible.

Please continue to stay safe, stay alert and control the virus by staying at home as much as possible.

Yours faithfully,

Mike Westerdale
Chief Executive Officer

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