



15<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

**A message from the Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors of the three maintained special schools in Telford and Wrekin - The Bridge, Haughton and Southall.**

Collectively, we want to thank all parents and carers for their support and understanding over the past months. We are all aware that the past months have been challenging for all - our pupils, parents/carers, family members and staff.

As schools, we have sustained places for a number of our pupils, along with supporting families whose children and young people are at home.

We all know the government has now announced that it wants pupils to attend school in September. We are very much looking forward to our pupils returning. We are all aware that we need to support pupils in their return and must have many safety processes in place to minimise COVID 19 risks. The government has stated it does not want pupils to attend on a rota system but has allowed for staggered start and finish times

Many mainstream schools are publishing their detailed planned arrangements. Special schools are in a complex situation nationally. In order for us to be able to finalise what we are doing, we need information that we currently do not have, e.g. information on how transport will work and cleaning guidance (that will impact on how we use rooms in school) which will not be published until August. Due to this, we will have to continue working on the plans over the summer and we will be sharing finalised plans towards the end of the summer holidays (prior to the return of schools in September). Schools will inform parents via website and some schools by email.

We can share at this point that:

- Pupils will be back in school full-time unless there is any change to local circumstances.
- Some pupils who are highly clinically vulnerable will need to seek advice from medical professionals as to whether they can attend school. For the very small number who cannot, our schools will work to support parents, pupils and learning in a personalised way. We will assume that parents have checked with medical professionals.
- Parents/carers need to be aware that start and finish times will be staggered. We anticipate start times may be up to 9.30 a.m. and leaving times may be from 2.15 p.m. We cannot give details yet of start and finish times as it is linked to transport and how we will manage car parks etc. We know that all of our pupils cannot leave at the same time at the end of the day. We ask parents/carers to be aware of this in terms of their own arrangements and as soon as we can give more details we will.
- There will be strict rules on pupils and staff NOT attending when they have symptoms of COVID 19. All will have to co-operate with Track and Trace and testing and any additional guidance being given by Public Health and Health and Safety. We will need parents to understand and support any requests to collect pupils immediately. We will continue to publish the most up to date guidance.

- We will make every attempt to sustain staffing levels to ensure that all pupils can attend school every day. We are aware though, we will have some staff who are unable to work in an environment where pupils will not socially distance. If other schools have staggered starts or people have to isolate through Track and Trace, isolate before medical interventions etc, then this will impact on staffing. As a last resort, we may have to ask some pupils not to attend on a given day, e.g. part of a class if staffing levels are not safe. We know this could have an impact on families, e.g. at work, but we ask all parents/carers to understand that safety must come first.

The government has produced a number of controls and the essential measures include:

- a requirement that people who are ill should stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school or college and wherever possible minimise potential for contamination, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The special schools are planning to:

- Have pupils in consistent bubbles, avoiding pupils mixing with other pupils
- Minimise the contact of adults across the bubbles
- Avoiding cross mixing of pupils, e.g. not having assemblies, and eating in class base rather than dining room
- Robust cleaning processes.

We have recently contacted families to determine if they are able to transport their child into school. We do understand that for some this is impossible and would like to thank those parents that can. LA decisions around transport play a significant part in what we do as schools and this needs to be finalised before whole school plans can be fully put into place.

The schools will be offering a Recovery Curriculum during the autumn term which will focus on the health and well-being of our pupils. For some pupils they will need as much of their old structure as possible. Some will need low demand/highly motivating activities, and some will be a mixture. We want to reassure families we will do all we can to support the return of pupils.

We will provide pupils with the broadest curriculum we can. We will have some restrictions on what we can do, e.g. using specialist rooms across the school, educational visits etc. We will update again when we have completed the risk management plan that we are all working together on.

In the meantime, we are sending all our families our very best of wishes. We sincerely thank you all for your support and understanding. We will provide you with more detailed information before the pupils return and over the summer holiday.

Take care all

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