



The
Bolton & Farnworth
C of E Primary
Multi Academy Trust
Together With God

Rupert Street, Bolton BL3 6PY

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21st May 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

As you are probably aware, your child's school is a member of the Bolton and Farnworth Church of England Primary Multi Academy Trust. As it is the Trust that supports your child's school I wanted to inform you of our plans for reopening our schools over the coming weeks. I apologise that this is a lengthy letter but there is a great deal of important information that you need to be aware of.

Firstly, I wanted to start by publicly thanking all of the staff in our schools for keeping our schools open throughout the lockdown period for vulnerable children and the children of key workers; they have achieved this whilst continuing to set work online, feeding back to your children and making regular contact with children at home. Our Headteachers have been working tirelessly to keep some form of education going for all whilst also juggling so many other aspects, including keeping up to date with Government guidelines. Throughout the crisis our cleaners and site staff have ensured that our schools have been kept spotlessly clean. I have been so impressed with the dedication of all our staff and I know that our staff have gone 'above and beyond' for which, I am deeply grateful.

The reopening of schools from the 1st June is not without controversy which is why I wanted you to be aware of what we are doing to ensure the safety of your children, our staff and our wider communities. I have consulted with our Trust Board at length. As a result, from 1st June our schools will start to reopen to pupils on a phased approach. The practicalities about reopening your school will be made by your Headteacher in consultation with your governing body as they know your pupils and families best. The government has stated that pupils in nursery, reception, Year 1 and Year 6 can **begin** to return from 1st June but we will not be having all of these pupils in together to start. We will start by welcoming Year 6 pupils back in the first week. We feel that it is important to start to increase numbers into our schools slowly so that we can ensure that systems are in place and working and that the risk to your children and staff is as low as possible. Therefore, by the end of this week your child's Headteacher will be writing to you to set out the plan for the week of 1st June and stating which pupils will be in each day that week. During the week of 1st June it is likely that your school will be operating shortened days for the pupils, staggering drop off and pick up times. Towards the end of that week, they will



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contact you again to outline the plans for the following week, this will allow us all to adapt to the new ways of working and for your child and to ensure staff feel confident that the plans will provide our best endeavors to ensure your child's safety. The staff from the Central Team, including myself will be visiting schools during the week commencing 1st June to monitor what is happening and to ensure that schools are as safe as they can be.

We must be clear, schools will **look very different places** for the rest of this academic year and there are certain new regulations that we are putting in place across our Trust from 1st June:

- * Children with a temperature, cough or cold like symptoms or have no taste or smell will not be allowed into school – parents must tell us if their child starts to experience any of these symptoms.
- * If a child lives in a household where anyone is showing these symptoms, they must keep their child at home for 14 days.
- * If your child starts to feel unwell with any of the above symptoms whilst in school, they will be immediately isolated and you will be contacted to come and collect your child immediately.
- * To start with, children will not be allowed to bring anything into school – the exception to this will be those children who normally bring a packed-lunch. These children will be allowed to bring a small, disposable bag with their lunch in only. All children should also bring a bottle of water each day, clearly labelled as they will not have access to cups or water fountains during the day.
- * Parents and other adults will not be allowed on to the school site – this is to ensure the safety of all children and we ask that you abide by this. Your child's school will inform you of the arrangements for dropping-off and collecting your children. Communication with the school must be by telephone or email. Please do not try to engage your child's teacher or other staff in conversation at the beginning or end of the day – their responsibility will be to closely supervise the children at this time
- * There will be no before or after school clubs.

Your child's school may have other individual regulations that they need to put in place depending on their school site etc. and will be communicating these to you.



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When the children are in school they will be kept in a 'bubble' and only interact with those children in that group – there will be a maximum of 15 in each of these bubbles – this may be considerably lower depending on the size of the classroom they are going to be allocated. These children will work together in the classroom, go to lunch together and stay together. It will not be possible to move children in or out of these bubbles. We ask that parents stick to the timetable for their child to be in school and do not opt for which sessions they would like their child to attend as this will make it very difficult for work continuity for the children and establishing routines, as well as protecting everyone.

Your child's usual teacher and teaching assistant may not be available to work currently. This could be for a variety of reasons, including the member of staff's own health or circumstances. As we will also have a maximum number of 15 children in each bubble, it will mean that we will have to call upon staff from other year groups to teach. If your child has special educational needs and receives support from a teaching assistant it may mean that for the next few weeks, or months we are unable to give them the level of support that we would normally – we ask parents to liaise with their child's school over these individual cases.

Since the crisis began, we have increased cleaning in schools – including during the day when the children are in school. We will continue this for the foreseeable future.

As we will require staff from other year groups to help deliver teaching in our nurseries, reception, Year 1 and Year 6 we are unlikely to be able to keep the same level of remote teaching going for those children still at home, though we will use our best endeavours to support pupils' learning at home. Therefore, in line with government guidelines we ask that parents access learning from BBC Bitesize (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>) and the online government academy Oaks Academy (<https://www.thenational.academy/>) where possible.

I have been extremely grateful to our staff who have kept our schools running every day since the start of the crisis. We have been able to offer education throughout this period, including bank holidays and the Easter break. In order that we can prepare our schools and the lessons to deliver to your children from 1st June we have decided to hold a virtual staff training day on Monday 1st June, to train all staff on



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health and safety protocols and risk assessments. Vulnerable and key worker children will still be able to attend school during the training day.

Our Trust is committed to getting your child back to school in a safe way and we feel that a phased approach with children on a phased return, at least during the first few weeks is the right approach. You may hear of other schools near to you that are opening fully to the selected year groups from 1st June. Each school though is different as each will have different numbers of staff shielding and their buildings may allow easier circulation of pupils etc.

The government has an ambition that all primary pupils will be back in school for at least one month before the end of the summer term. They have stated that this will be dependent on a continued decrease of the COVID-19 virus across the country. When we know more about the government's plans we will be in touch again with you.

The Trust understand that the decision whether to send your child to school may be difficult; we hope we have provided reassurance with the protective measures we are putting in place. Children will be invited to return to school however the decision remains with yourself.

Thank you for the support you are showing to our school staff and taking the time to read through this lengthy letter.

Your faithfully

Mrs. Jill Pilling
Chief Executive Officer

I have little to add other than to express my huge thanks to Mrs. Pilling and to all our staff across the Trust for all that they have been doing for the past two months and for their preparations for a phased return to school from the beginning of June. All that they have done has been with the unreserved support of the Trustees.

Canon Dr. Chris Bracegirdle
Chair of Trust Board