

Date: 15/05/2020



Dear fellow TMET staff

I would like to follow up the email I sent you on Monday to explain a little more about the Trust's plans for reopening schools. I would also like to state once again how proud of you all I am for ensuring that the last few weeks have been purposeful and positive for firstly our children of essential workers and vulnerable children who have attended our schools and secondly the large groups of pupils at home. Some amazing activities have taken place and some very imaginative work has been provided, accompanied by very thorough contacts with families and children wherever possible. Thank you!

I want now to share with you our intentions going forward and I do this in the spirit of reassurance and preparation. At this stage we have thoroughly considered all the recent government documents and advice on schools reopening to a greater extent and thought carefully about how we can best respond. Very detailed risk assessments have been drawn up and site specific issues evaluated. We have also discussed our intentions and approach with trade unions and will continue to do this as things develop.

We have applied the following principles to support our thinking:

1. The obligation and determination to ensure the safety of pupils, families and staff, by helping to reduce the spread of the virus;
2. A commitment to the welfare and wellbeing of pupils and staff;
3. The need to address inequity and disadvantage, mitigating the impact of educational disruption, particularly on our most vulnerable and disadvantaged students;
4. The desire to support our families and the local economy by supporting parents to go back to work and mitigating the impact of a deeper recession and more child poverty, with the deleterious impact that child poverty has on future life chances;
5. The approach to planning the task in a measured and deliberate way, making the best possible decisions on the basis of the evidence we have and within the constraints and parameters we face in our schools and trust.

We realised just how challenging it is to address all these principles safely but we are committed to do our best. We will continue to be open to pupils in any year groups, who are children of essential workers or who are vulnerable and we will be proactive in encouraging attendance, particularly for vulnerable children. Our reasoning for this is that it is and can continue to be done safely.

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## **PRIMARY**

We have carefully considered the suggestion of nursery, R, Y1 and Y6 all returning at a date after 1st June and decided that, on current information and school based risk analysis; it wouldn't be safe or logistically possible to bring in so many primary children full time in the year groups suggested.

We will monitor advice and guidance and when it is safe to increase numbers in schools, we will begin a carefully managed transition period for children, providing an opportunity for them to visit schools, in small groups. With Year 6 children, we will endeavour to give them time in their primaries plus a possible transition session at their new secondary school. Additionally, we will continue to provide the learning and pastoral support remotely for all pupils.

## **SECONDARY**

Again, when we expand our opening, we will start the transition period very slowly and we will aim to give Year 10 students dedicated time to kick-start their exam preparation for next academic year, but this will be in small groups, part time and complying with social distancing rules.

We will follow the public health advice in minimising person to person contact whilst ensuring that groups are small enough to maintain rules on social distancing and this will mean changes to staffing rotas that have operated to date. You can be assured that the approach to this will be fair and reasonable and we will be issuing you with clear guidance on the steps we have taken, and the expectations of you, to ensure safety in your workplace.

We will continue to monitor the situation with Covid-19 and I can assure you that your safety and wellbeing is of utmost importance. I am mindful of the need for a transition period for you and your colleagues, as well as our young people, and it is therefore our intention to arrange wellbeing discussions and face to face time with colleagues for reflection and planning. This will take place at the start of next half term and will be carefully coordinated in a safe way. We will ensure our focus on safety and welfare protects all staff, by using our risk assessed protocols carefully to reduce person to person risk.

Subject to ongoing advice (which we are monitoring very closely) there may be a gradual return for some additional students from 8 June and sessions in school for you and colleagues from 1 June and your Principal will be in touch about this. Whilst no fixed dates can be confirmed at this stage, we would like all staff to be aware of this potential return to expanded work activities on site. We are undertaking an exercise to determine which roles can continue to work from home.

The enclosed letter includes important information about medical conditions that increase the risk of Covid-19 and I urge you to read and respond to this as a priority. Some staff, especially those who are shielding with extreme medical issues and a letter from the NHS, will continue to shield and work from home and if you are in this position you may have discussed it with your line manager or HR already but please respond as requested so that we can update records and have an accurate picture. Whilst not extremely vulnerable and therefore shielding, others may fall within the clinically vulnerable group as described in the enclosed letter and if you believe this to apply to you then please ensure that you respond as requested. We will have specific discussions with you about your circumstances and support you moving forward. It has been indicated that the list of conditions in this category are likely to be adapted as scientific evidence develops and we will follow this closely.

I know that many of you are parents yourselves and as essential workers you are entitled to a school or childcare place should you wish to access one now or in the future as we transition to increased levels of onsite work. If you would like to discuss a request for reduced hours or unpaid leave you can discuss this with your Principal.

Thank you for your continued commitment and effort and I will keep you updated on the changing situation.

**Together we make a positive difference**

With very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn Robson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.

**Carolyn Robson**

**Chief Executive Officer**

P.S. Please feel free to send in any questions or comments to the Trust office via [cjohnston@tmet.uk](mailto:cjohnston@tmet.uk). We will keep a rolling Q&A going on a weekly basis or as needed.