

*Working together
to achieve excellence in education*



Wednesday 20th May

Dear Parents and Carers of students in Years 10 and 12

In light of the announcements from the Government and the media attention surrounding the possible wider opening of schools from 1st June, I am writing to provide you with an outline of the approach being taken by schools within the River Learning Trust through this exceptionally challenging period.

As you will be aware, the Government is currently aiming for a wider opening of schools for children in Nursery, Reception, Y1 and Y6 from 1st June, whilst noting this date may change. Detailed guidance was released to primary schools on the evening of Thursday 14th May and schools and members of the RLT Central Team have been planning for how we can best implement this guidance.

At the time of writing, guidance in relation to secondary school wider opening has been much less specific and clear. When schools were closed to the majority of pupils, schools were asked to remain open for pupils in any year group who were designated as being vulnerable or from a critical worker family, and this arrangement will continue. The DfE has now indicated that secondary schools should aim to “begin to provide some face to face support” for students in Year 10 and Year 12 during term 6. We do want to see students beginning to return to schools, and share the government’s aspiration to widen our provision in a way which is suitable. However, guidance is clear that secondary schools are not expected to open full time during this period, or to attempt to replicate a pre-epidemic school experience.

Clearly, devising plans which reduce risk to students and staff, provide a meaningful and worthwhile experience for young people, and which are sensible in the context of each individual school, is not straightforward. Headteachers are collaborating with each other and the central trust team to draft appropriate approaches given the considerable differences in size, location, staffing and buildings across our diverse schools.

Headteachers will be communicating their thinking with you, and as appropriate more detail of school-specific approaches which are being taken. Please do continue to read and take account of the updates and guidance Headteachers are providing as they navigate a path for the whole school community through these unprecedented times.

Based on our work with Primary Schools and despite some local differences in approach, the following features are being planned across our schools:

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- A full risk assessment is being carried out and put in place. This risk assessment will lead to the individual plans being put in place in each school
- Social distancing will be essential and clear procedures in place to ensure this, such as the rearranging of furniture and limits on corridor use
- The number of students in school at any one time will be limited
- Social time at lunch and break will be very limited, if present at all
- Resources cannot move between home and school
- Remote learning will continue to be the main method of teaching
- There will be regular cleaning during the day of certain surfaces (such as door handles, desk tops etc)
- There will be regular hand washing for pupils and staff and the 'catch-it, bin-it, kill-it' approach will be followed.

As a result of these approaches we hope to be able to welcome back more students into our schools. We expect that initial approaches may involve small numbers of students being in school for limited periods of time, with a growth in regularity and scale when the scientific evidence and Government guidance suggests it is sensible to do so. In the meantime, schools will continue with the great efforts that are being made to provide remote learning of a high quality.

These are difficult and challenging times and I would ask for your patience and understanding as our schools seek to navigate the many complexities of this situation as best as they can.

Yours sincerely



Paul James
Chief Executive

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