

29th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

COVID-19 – Schools re-opening to more pupils

I hope that you and your families are well and safe. Our thoughts are with those families who have suffered illness, hardship or bereavement in these difficult times.

I am writing to update you about arrangements for the phased return of some pupils to our schools, in addition to vulnerable children and the children of key workers who were already attending before the half term.

Our schools – Blue Coat, St George's and Mayfield – are all governed by a Trust Board, which is the employer of all the staff, and the body answerable to the Secretary of State for Education. It is therefore the body, which is responsible for making the decisions to reopen, advised by the Headteacher working with the Trust Executive.

The Trust Board met during half term and decided the following:

- We all want to get the children and young people back to continue their learning and their personal and social development, and to keep them safe as their parents start to return to the workplace. The priority is that our schools start to re-open to more children and staff **safely**, so we will do this in a careful and measured way. Our sites are all different, so it will look different in each school, but the principles will be the same. **We want parents – and staff – to know that all possible steps have been taken to ensure our schools are as safe as they can be.**
- Each school has prepared a detailed risk assessment, following the advice of SAGE and the Health and Safety Executive. It includes the need to distance children, minimise mixing of groups by creating “bubbles” of children, ensure strict hygiene and cleaning of classrooms, corridors and toilets, manage pupil movement in and out of school and on the school site. We are also liaising with the bus companies re the arrangements for our secondary students who do not live within walking or cycling distance. All of this has been discussed by the Trust Board, for each school, and approved. It will be kept under review.
- Where we cannot physically bring children back into school, we will continue to provide home learning and staff contact for those year groups.

With this in mind, the arrangements for our schools will be:

1. **For all 3 schools on week beginning Monday, 1st June 2020**, we continue to be open to vulnerable children and the children of key workers **only**. These will be the same **pupils who were attending up to half term**. If your circumstances have changed, please contact the Headteacher of your school from Monday. Please do not send your child into school without having this conversation first. We do not want to have to send children home because we are not prepared for them to be in school.
2. **Mayfield** – Mayfield already has a high number of vulnerable children and children of key workers in school and the school has reduced space and toilets because of the building work that is currently taking place. We will therefore bring in **Year 6** in 2 halves, on alternate weeks, half starting on **Monday, 8th June 2020** and the other half starting on **Monday, 15th June 2020**.

Mr Couper-Barton will contact parents/carers directly to explain the detail of these arrangements.

I am afraid that Mayfield will **not** be able to bring in children from **any other year groups**, whilst the current distancing rules apply.

3. **St George's** (which has more space) – will phase in pupils as follows:
 - **From Monday, 1st June 2020:** vulnerable children and children of key workers only
 - **From Monday, 8th June 2020:** Year 6 pupils, for 4 days per week
 - **From Monday, 15th June 2020:** Year 1 pupils, for 5 mornings per week – this is dependent on sufficient staff being available.

Mrs Ross will contact parents/carers directly to explain the detail of these arrangements.

I am afraid that St George's will **not** be able to bring in children from **any other year groups**, whilst the current distancing rules apply.

4. **Blue Coat** – the guidance is that Years 10 and 12 should have some face to face contact from Monday, 15th June 2020. A school should never have more than 25% of a year group on site. Therefore, the arrangements for Blue Coat are:
 - **From Monday, 1st June 2020:** vulnerable children and children of key workers only
 - **From Monday, 15th June 2020:** Years 10 and 12 all attend for one session per week.

Home learning for other year groups will continue throughout.

Mr Higgins will contact parents/carers directly to explain the detail of these arrangements.

General points for all schools

1. **Young people who show symptoms of COVID 19 i.e. temperature, sore throat, cough**
Please do not send them to school. Keep them at home for 7 days in line with Public Health England guidance. The rest of the household should quarantine for 14 days. The new test-and-trace system should help, and we will send further details/advice when we have them. If we are concerned that pupils might have contracted the virus, we will have to send them home immediately.
2. **Face masks**
We are following SAGE advice that face masks are not necessary, or recommended in schools, for pupils or staff. You may wish your child to wear a mask when travelling to and from school, but when they are on our sites, they will need to remove it. If masks are not worn correctly and changed regularly, they can become a hazard in themselves. Keeping our pupils in small groups, with distancing, and maintaining strict hygiene, means that the risk of transmission of the virus is minimised. Staff will have access to face masks and other PPE for first aid.
3. **School uniform**
It is recommended that parents wash pupils' uniform every day on a hot wash. St George's will not expect pupils to wear their school tie. Blue Coat students who will only be attending for one day per week will have time to air and rest their blazer and tie (year 10) or suit (year12) if these are not washable.

4. **School lunches**

Where these are provided, they will be cold/sandwiches or grab-bags in secondary. This is because we must maintain distance in the dining areas and hot food would be impossible. It is likely that children will eat in their classroom or outside if we can, but they will need to keep in their "bubbles". You may decide to make a packed lunch at home.

5. **Vouchers**

We will continue to issue free school meal vouchers to all families who qualify.

6. **Staffing**

The situation we are in is changing rapidly, so further changes may be possible. Your school will keep you up to date. You will understand that one key variable is the availability of staff. All our arrangements have been planned based on the staffing establishment of each school and bearing in mind that some staff are themselves shielding. That said, if staff themselves became ill, we might need to make changes to our plans, particularly in our primaries which have much smaller numbers of staff.

Finally

We appreciate that you may be concerned or anxious after children and young people have been at home for so long. I hope that you will be reassured by the information above, and the further detail that your Headteacher will send, and that you will see that we are managing this return with the utmost care. Sadly, there are limits to how many pupils we can safely accommodate under current guidance, but we will continue to provide remotely for those year groups who cannot attend, and/or those subjects for years 10 and 12 which cannot be fitted into the limited time we have.

We send all our families our very best wishes and look forward to starting again, in whatever form.

Stay safe and God Bless.

Yours sincerely



JULIE HOLLIS
Chief Executive Officer
The Cranmer Education Trust