

22 May 2020

JTn/cmj

Dear Parents Carers

Please find below details regarding the phased re-opening of The Acorn from **Thursday 4 June**.

Health and safety

Following the completion of the trust-wide Risk Assessment, we have carried out individual site checks in each of our Academies. These site checks inform the detail of Academy Risk Assessments including safe physical capacity. We have tried to adhere as far as possible to the principles of social distancing **in addition** to the 'hierarchy of controls' measures outlined by the Government in its guidance. This means that our group sizes will be smaller than the maximum 15 stated in the DfE Guidance and that our Academies will not be near full usual capacity, even within the year groups scheduled to return. On the basis of this safe available capacity, places for children will be prioritised in line with our guiding principles (i.e. preferencing vulnerable pupils and the children of critical workers in the first instance). If your child is not allocated a place in the first phase they will be placed on a waiting list.

Place allocation

Since schools were closed to the majority of children on 23rd March, we have worked together to utilise our spaces in line with Government guidance to provide provision to those most in need; vulnerable children and children of critical workers. We have seen between a very low number of children attending our Academy and we are aware that this low number is as result of the nation's efforts to 'stay at home', in line with Government recommendation. From 1 June the Government is actively encouraging children of critical workers to take up provision in schools and academies, and we expect to see an increase in attendance in line with that expected nationally - from 1/2% to around 20%. For the primary phase in our academy this has meant that we have quickly reached a safe capacity. We have made allocation decisions in collaboration with families and have shared more details about what The Acorn will look and feel like, in order for you to make an informed decision about returning to take a space. For the key groups selected and shared in the Guidance; Early Years, Year 1 and children of critical workers, we are developing an offer that we hope will include a thorough review of learning, a focus on mental health and opportunities to reconnect and share stories.

Wider re-opening

We have, and will continue, to plan in detail for wider re-opening and the three determining factors by which we have decided our capacity has been:

- Space available in our building to safely accommodate 'bubbles' of children
- Staff availability to return
- Number of families who request/need a place.

In addition, the next formal update from the Government with regard to their own safe measures is not due to take place until Thursday 28 May, so all plans and places are provisional up until confirmation from Academies after this point/at the start of term on 1 June.

Re-opening timeline

In line with the government guidance, all primary academies will prepare for the widening of provision by opening their buildings from 1 June.

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We will continue to meet the needs of critical workers and our most vulnerable children during those first three days of term (the children who have been attending our hubs up to this point). However, we are asking that if alternative childcare can be used, we would be very grateful. Otherwise this time has been dedicated for staff training and induction to support all staff who will be coming onto site from 1 June. This means The Acorn will open more widely from Thursday 4 June at the earliest. We will only re-open when it is safe and proper to do so.

Timetabling

Children of critical workers

These children will continue to be offered a full time place. We would encourage full time attendance from 4 June if we re-open as planned.

Other children

These children will be offered a place 4 days a week. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday.

Wednesdays

We will close on a Wednesday except to those children of **essential** critical workers and other extremely vulnerable children. This is to allow the learning space to undergo an enhanced clean, for leadership and teaching teams to review the dynamic risk assessment and to allow time for planning and preparation of learning on-site and the distance learning provision for the majority of our pupils, who are still currently learning from home. It is critical that we have the **smallest numbers of children possible** on this day and would ask parents to find alternative child care if at all possible.

Breakfast and afterschool club

This cannot safely reopen due to needing to maintain the integrity of the 'bubbles'. Some staff have indicated that they are happy to supervise children before and after school times. The times will be 8 am – 4 pm but we must stress this is a significant request for teaching staff and I would **urge parents not to use it unless absolutely essential and only if alternative arrangements cannot be found.**

Timing of the school day

There will be staggered drop off and collection times for each group/bubble of children and strict social distancing measures on the playground. More details will be sent to the families of those children who have been allocated a place.

What will The Acorn look and feel like?

We are planning to be offering 7 bubbles of up to 10 children. The children will be kept strictly in this group at all times during the day and there will be no mixing of other bubbles. Children will enter their bubble from the playground and have designated toilets to use. Each bubble will eat in their own space and have allocated time slots for outdoor play.

The curriculum will be mainly based around rich, beautiful books using an approach called Power of Reading. This is being chosen as it allows for a significant investment of time looking at thoughts, feelings and well-being, whilst re-engaging children in the literacy curriculum.

We of course will continue to include mindfulness, maths, physical development and expressive arts.

Distance learning

Thank you for your ongoing, positive feedback about our offer of distance learning. The communication and engagement has been wonderful and we very much aim for it to continue. As we plan to re-open, the distance learning offered is being reviewed and may need to be changed and refined in order for a smaller number of

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staff working remotely to complete this. We will be looking to incorporate the CLF platform to support this offer. As part of a trust, with a school improvement team and expert teachers, from our own schools, contributing and building learning resources that are bespoke to our CLF curriculum – this will develop over time and we will support you and your child as this develops.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Jo Thorn
Head of Primary Phase

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