

18th May 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Staff,

On behalf of PEAK Multi Academy Trust, I wanted to communicate with all stakeholders during this difficult time and share with you aspects of the considerable work that teachers, support staff and leaders are undertaking. Each of the four schools within our Trust have been faced with many issues during the period of lockdown, and attempted to provide activities for pupil learning, whilst safeguarding our most vulnerable and supporting the children of key workers. Many have gone above and beyond and had to deal with their own personal circumstances in these unprecedented times. Both the Trust Board and the Executive Team have been highly supportive of the continuation of provision and exceptional leadership being shown in each of the schools.

During these months, the senior leaders have collaborated and supported one another across the Trust, with Headteachers meeting regularly with myself and the Executive Team to devise and plan strategies for ongoing operations. Needless to say, the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff have been at the forefront of daily agendas, and they have worked together alongside the daily guidance or government directives as they happen. I have been in regular contact with the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Local Authority outlining the plans for all schools within the Trust, and taken advice back to the leaders for them to act on. The recent announcement from the Prime Minister regarding the re-opening of schools has resulted in significant challenges for each of our schools alongside all schools nationally. Risk assessments around the safeguarding issues on each of our sites have been the most urgent focus and one, which constitutes the greatest challenge. Each Headteacher is working closely with staff and union representatives within their schools to plan for the re-opening reintegration of more pupils returning to school. Given the nature, age, and manpower available within each setting and the advised year groups returning, this will certainly mean each of our schools will have very different opportunities to achieve this goal. What I can state is that, all schools are planning and have been doing so according to the often-changing daily guidance coming from the Department for Education (DfE). As we know, during these times, everything is subject to change and with Health and Safety the priority for all staff and pupils, we must ensure the mitigation of risk remains our number one priority across all our schools.

As a Trust, we take advice and guidance from all parties associated with education including the Local Authority, professional unions, stakeholders, and the Department for Education. Much of the latest advice and guidance can appear at odds with one another, however, the primary goal for all will be a safe return to education for all parties. When we have the fullest and accurate level of information, to aid a safe return, then we will work with everyone to ensure our children and staff once again experiences the highest quality of education across our schools.

The National Governance Association has provided the most appropriate interpretation of advice and guidance, in my opinion. They have clearly indicated their understanding of the issues associated with a return and offered the following to all governors nationwide:

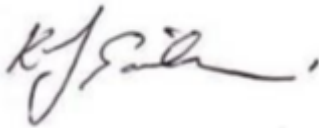
‘Remember that the Government’s aim is for schools to begin opening further from 1 June and not on 1 June. We already know that not everyone will be ready to do so from 1 June; we also know the ask is very different for infants, primary, secondary, and special phases. The Government’s ambition for all primary school children to return for a full month before the summer holidays seems highly unlikely for many, if not almost all schools.

“Life is a journey and nobody’s path is certain in this rapidly changing world. Together we are stronger. We will guide and inspire you along the way. When you let go of our hand, you and I will know that you will choose the path that is best for you.”

It is important to recognise that the Government guidance is just that, guidance, and although it mentions groups of 15 children, it may be your headteacher/trust executive assesses that your premises are not large enough to take that many children in a group safely in the first instance. That is a decision they can use their discretion to take. The assessment of risk will need to be constantly updated as circumstances change.'
15th May 2020.

PEAK Multi Academy Trust will continue to look at each of our schools and phases of education, and support them to return when the time is right, and when the health and safety issues are addressed as best as they can be. This may mean that one school may look to reintegrate more pupils ahead of another, as it is able to meet the requirements of its own risk assessment. We will continue to support one another throughout the process and address each piece of advice and guidance and recommendation as it comes. Our aim has never diminished throughout these trying times, and we have welcomed the support many have given to each of our schools with an understanding of the difficulties we all face. Each Headteacher will continue to provide information bespoke to their own settings, as we continue our journey together towards a fully functioning and effective education system once again.

Yours Sincerely,



Kevin J Gaiderman
CEO of Peak Multi Academy Trust