



Wednesday 13th May 2020

GST Statement to Parents and Carers

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are sure that you will be aware of the Government's statement on Sunday evening regarding the intention that schools will begin to admit children from certain year groups beginning on 1st June. There has since been some guidance for schools and many of you will have seen this too. There is much media speculation about many aspects of what schools will do next. We would like to clarify our position in the Gosforth Schools' Trust.

The Government has stated that the first children to return to school will be Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. As a group of schools, and with support from the Local Authority, we are now beginning to consider how we might be able to increase our current capacity. In order to establish what we believe to be safe for our school communities, our first task is to address the level of risk which the Government has asked us to assume. This is a difficult and lengthy process which involves close collaboration with partners such as Public Health England, the Local Authority and other agencies who support our schools. We want to make you aware that if schools find that they can safely admit some children, it will not resemble our usual educational provision. For example, it is highly likely that any places will be part time with staggered arrival and pick up times, children will not necessarily be in their own classrooms or with staff who have taught them so far in this academic year and there will be very limited opportunities for play and close interaction with other children and adults. While we are committed to working together and sharing best practice to find safe solutions, it is likely that any possible provision offered will vary from school to school. Arrangements which might be put in place will depend on staffing and site conditions which are specific to each setting. We also need to consider how the guidance from the DfE can be made to work in our three tier system and if at all possible, support pupils at the points of transition.

There is no school leader or member of staff in our Trust who wants to delay a return to school for longer than is absolutely necessary but we are approaching any changes or partial expansion to our current capacity with considerable caution. We believe that most parents and carers too will be extremely concerned about sending their children to school when the wider community is still practising social distancing and there are still restrictions in place designed to keep our communities safe. This is why we need time and support to rigorously assess the level of risk, consider what actions we need to take, and then determine whether these are feasible. Until we have spent this time developing risk assessments and possible plans, schools will be unable to answer any questions about how we intend to proceed.

Your own child's school will remain in contact with you and will keep you up to date with any decisions which have been made. Thank you for your patience and support.

Best Wishes,

Kate Massey/Archbishop Runcie First School, Rebecca Turner/Archibald First School, Helen McKenna/Broadway East First School, Gill McKay/Brunton First School, Caroline Ash/Dinnington First School, Leanne Lamb/Gosforth First School, Susannah Webb/Gosforth Central Middle School, Tim Stout/Gosforth

East Middle School, Matt Ward/Grange First School, Helen Moore/Regent Farm First School and Rob Adams/South Gosforth First School.