

21st May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to update you on the plans in place in ODST schools in response to the Government's guidelines to begin opening schools to more pupils. You will be aware that the Government is currently considering asking us to reopen from 1st June 2020, and that all our ODST schools, like a number of other schools both locally and nationally, are holding additional in-service days on the 1st and 2nd June. This is in order to ensure staff are fully familiarised with new routines, that classrooms are ready and that additional health and safety, safeguarding and training needs can be met. In this way, we can be confident that as our schools open their doors to more pupils they do so safely and that we can minimise the risk of coronavirus transmission for both staff and pupils.

All our ODST schools have completed a detailed individual risk assessment; this has been scrutinised and signed off at various levels and each school has then put in place their own unique plan. Because each school is different, the decisions which each school setting has made in order to ensure the safety of children and adults are also different. There is, therefore, no cause for concern if your child's school is working things through in a different way to other schools in the area.

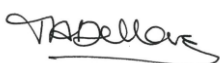
The Government has asked us to work towards opening for all pupils in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, but we have also been asked to ensure classes are a maximum size of 15, and that children and adults work in a "bubble" where contact with anyone outside the "bubble" is minimised. We are also continuing to remain open for vulnerable students and those whose parents are key workers. Not all our ODST schools can achieve opening for all these pupils at once in a way that meets everybody's needs and is safe. Your school may be asking you to send your child on a part-time or rota basis initially, especially in schools where space is limited. The need to keep children together in a "bubble" may mean your school is closing for a period of time each week during this highly unusual period, so teachers can have some planning time without another adult being asked to teach the class and hence break the bubble. Schools are also using this time to deep clean. It may even be that the current 1st June date to which we are working might be delayed should the Government's key tests not be met. We have made these changes in some schools because it is the right thing to do.

Thank you for your patience as we have gone through the process of producing a plan which we believe is right for your child's school. If your child is in one of the groups that we are welcoming back, we encourage you to send your child to school as long as he/she is well.

We remain committed to the education of all our ODST children; I recognise that for many of you this potential change will leave some or all of your children still learning at home. We will continue to endeavour to provide a programme of home learning for all those we are not able to welcome back in person just yet. Try not to worry about your children "getting behind" - we are already thinking and planning for the teaching we will do in the months to come to help them enjoy school, continue to thrive and make strong progress once they are all back full time.

We may well need to continue to make changes to the way our schools operate as the national coronavirus situation continues to evolve. We remain committed to educating children in the best way we possibly can; the safety of our staff and pupils remains at the centre of our decision-making. Thank you for your support and understanding.

Yours sincerely



Anne Dellar
Chief Executive - Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust