

20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As I am sure you are aware our schools are working tirelessly to look after your children and build contingency plans for the coming weeks. An awful lot has already been undertaken behind the scenes but the current situation is constantly changing. Staffing levels are unpredictable and the number of staff having to self-isolate is growing. With this in mind we will send as many updates as possible to you as and when we can.

The principles that we are operating across the Trust are those sent us by the government:

1. **If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.**
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them. However, our schools will need to keep staffing under constant review and may have to limit numbers based on critical worker priority to ensure they can keep children safe depending on numbers of staff in school.
3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
4. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.
5. Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.

Please can I also remind you that children not in school need to be following the advice on social distancing:

Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce the social interaction between people. This will help reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

They are:

1. Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough
2. Avoid non-essential use of public transport, varying your travel times to avoid rush hour, when possible
3. Avoid large gatherings, and gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars, clubs
4. Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media
5. Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services

Your children should be trying to follow these measures whilst in your care.

Best wishes



**Paul Rickeard**  
CEO  
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