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**Head of School: Joan Wright**

 18th May 2020

Dear All

I am writing to provide an update on the position and plans of both Springfield School and The Meadows School. I am sure you will have all seen or are aware of the announcement made on Sunday 10th May that Primary Schools can re-open to Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from 1st June at the earliest. There was no mention of Special Schools in the announcement. On the following Monday night, the full guidance for all schools was released. The direction for Special Schools was that it was hoped we could welcome back more children and young people, but to do so gradually and based on risk assessment. No date or timetable was given.

For the last week, we have been working with the Local authority and the Manor Hall Academy Trust, reading the guidance, working out if and how we could re-open and what we would need to think about to make sure children and young people and staff are safe if and when we do.

The safety of everyone is our greatest priority, we will spend the next few weeks going through all the ways we can to make the site, buildings and classrooms safe so that we can welcome back more children, young people and adults. Only once we are confident with those plans, we will be in a position to talk to our staff and then we would want to give them time to understand those plans and then to make the changes. We will also be led by the position of the Unions with regards to the advice they are giving to their members. Once we have done this we will share our plans with parents and carers so that they can make the decision as to whether they are willing to send their son or daughter back to school at this point. It remains the recommendation that any child with health conditions that makes them susceptible to Covid 19 remains at home. Even for those children who are not within a high risk group it is the decision of parents and carers as to whether to send them back to school.

Given the very difficult task ahead of us, it is highly unlikely we will be in a position to re-open to more children and students by the 1st June. When we do re-open it will be gradual. Not all the children and young people will return at once however given the ethos of our schools what is important to us, is to try and give the same opportunity to all our families as far as we can. Our aspiration is to provide access to the schools for all the families that want a place, and with our agreement that it is safe for that child to attend, before the summer holidays. There will be many new rules and routines in the schools when children do return and it will be important that we have time to help them learn these, ideally before September. However, it is important to be clear that when we do re-open, the vast majority of children and young people will not be able to attend for five days a week, unless they are part of a family with an essential key worker. We will have to adopt a rota, so that we can keep class sizes down and manage the risks. At this point we do not expect the vast majority of children or young people to be offered any more than one or two days a week.

I wish I could be more clear as to what lies ahead however we are facing many challenges and uncertainties. As soon as we feel in a position to share our plans in greater detail we will be in touch.

In the meantime, thank you to all our pupils, students, families and staff for the way you have coped with the big challenges you have faced and the support you have shown to one another.

Keep safe

Kind regards



Christopher Best

Executive Headteacher and Deputy CEO for the Manor Hall Academy Trust