

18th May 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

COVID19 School Reopening

Firstly, I do hope you and your families are as well and safe as can be during this difficult time. Thank you for your patience and for your ongoing support as we work together to ensure our children are supported as best as we can. Our teachers and staff are grateful for the thoughtful and kind messages they have received from you and the photos of the home learning activities are an absolute joy to see.

Following the Government's announcement regarding its aspiration for schools to open to more children from 1st June, we want to provide an update as to where the Aspire Academy Trust is with its planning, and what this may mean for your child(ren)'s academy. The Government's decision is unlikely to be confirmed until 28th May and will be subject to meeting the five conditions set out by the Government a few weeks ago.

We understand that this is a time of great uncertainty and that you may be feeling anxious about sending your children to school. Let me reassure you, the safety and wellbeing of our children and staff is paramount and remains our priority at all times. Your confidence is important to us and we will answer your questions openly and honestly.

Aspire has put together a set of principles to guide each individual school. The principles and steps we outline below are based on both [Government guidance](#) and our own risk assessments plus the capacity of each school. They seek to strike a balance between the safety of children, their families and staff. The Trust recognises that there are equally risks if children stay at home or return to school, at this time. We have taken a cautious, phased approach and put into place systems and procedures to maximise the safety of children and adults alike in our school communities. There are detailed risk assessments in place for each school.

Attendance in school from 1st June is not compulsory for any year group and our proposals need to be viewed as an offer – each family must decide what is right for them. There will be no attendance issues if you choose not to send your child back at this time.

Over the past week, we have worked hard to put into place systems and procedures to maximise the safety of children and adults in our school communities. In planning, we have taken into consideration the needs, vulnerabilities and concerns of all staff and children. If it is not possible to implement opening in the way outlined by the Department for Education, then we limit what we do to what is safe.



No two schools are the same, buildings differ, pupil numbers differ, inside and outside space differs. Therefore, the number and year group ranges that each school will be able to offer places to, will be different according to each individual school's circumstances. Schools have considered all available staff, the size of each building and the needs of the children. **Please note that all plans and offers of places are conditional on the outcome of the scientific evidence issued by the Government on 28th May.**

With final numbers for our keyworker/vulnerable children across the Trust being confirmed at the moment, we would ask all parents of Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 (who are NOT keyworkers) to please fill in the [REGISTRATION FORM](#) to indicate whether, or not, you intend sending your child(ren) back to nursery/school, subject to final confirmation. This link will also be available on your child(ren)'s academy's Facebook page. **The deadline for submission is 12 noon on Thursday 21st May.**

We will then begin prioritising year groups as defined by the Department for Education (DFE). All Aspire academies will decide which children they are able to offer places to, according to the following priorities:

1. **Key Workers**

To enable key workers to continue doing their essential work, all children with any parent who is a key worker will be offered a place until the end of term as a top priority. If a parent accepts this place, this will be held open/reserved for you every day until the end of the school year. You do not need to attend every day, but the place is there if you wish to do so. This provision will be available from Monday 1st June.

If a school receives a new request for a place for the child of a key worker after 1st June, this will be accommodated, if possible, by a school *only* if it is safe to do so.

2. **Vulnerable* children and SEND pupils**

Places will then be issued to the parents of all children considered 'vulnerable' as per the DFE guidance and for children with an EHCP. These places will be held open and protected up until the end of the school year, regardless of whether they are taken up by a parent or not. The Aspire Academy Trust recognises that the circumstances of these children and families can change and we must protect the offer to and safety of these children.

*For a definition of vulnerable please visit www.aspireacademytrust.org/coronavirus

This provision will be available from Monday 1st June.

3. **Nursery and Reception children**

The youngest children in the school will have places offered next, if there are any remaining. This is because they are seen to be disadvantaged the most in terms of

learning. Places will be offered to these children, only if it is possible to create small 'pods' for all the children in that year group whose parents have requested a place. These places will be available up until 10th July.

If available this provision will be available from Tuesday 2nd June.

4. **Year 1**

If any places remain, they will then be offered to the parents of Y1 children. If available this provision will be available from Tuesday 2nd June.

5. **Year 6**

We understand and appreciate the need for Y6 children to have some time in school before the end of the summer term as they will be transitioning to secondary school in September. We will provide Y6 parents with an update as soon as possible.

How will we keep your children safe?

Extensive planning and risk assessments are taking place. We will only open each academy when we deem it is safe to do so according to both DFE and our own risk assessments.

Your own school will detail the specific and local measures taking place. Below are some principles and basic modifications to normal routines that all academies will be adhering to.

From 1st June at the earliest, the following new procedures will be in place to protect our staff and pupils:

Pick Up & Drop Off Procedures

To safeguard our children and staff and minimise the risk of any virus transmission, we will not be allowing parents to enter the school/nursery building. Children should be brought to school by one adult only, where possible, and will be dropped outside the building.

For our nursery parents - should your child require physically handing over due to their age, staff will be wearing protective visors. Please do not approach staff until they indicate it is safe to do so.

Markers will be placed 2 metres away from all classroom doors which parents must not cross. Your child's teacher will be at the classroom door and will call children to leave once they have identified the person collecting.

When picking up or dropping off, please do not congregate in groups and please maintain social distancing at all times.

Should you need to speak to a member of school staff please do not come into school but call to prearrange a meeting. Meetings will be undertaken either by phone, online, or where it must be face-to-face, in a safe socially-distanced manner.

Illness Procedures

We would like to remind parents that children should not be sent into nursery/school if they are unwell. Any child who presents with a cough or fever will be sent home.

Should you, your child or another member of your family develop potential COVID-19 symptoms, you must self-isolate immediately and please ensure that you inform the school as soon as possible, regardless of when your child is next due to attend. This is so we can undertake additional risk assessments and put in place any further precautionary measures that may be needed.

All children who are attending nursery/school, and their families, will be eligible for COVID-19 testing should they develop symptoms. Anyone who becomes unwell should access this testing as soon as possible and keep the school updated on their results. Anyone who does not access testing will not be allowed to return to nursery/school until the end of the self-isolation period (7 days for the person who is unwell, 14 days for the family).

Should we have a confirmed case of COVID-19 in one of our nurseries/schools, the Trust has contingency plans in place for contact isolation, closure of the setting for deep cleaning and reopening of closed areas of the premises which have already been cleaned to allow us to continue to operate.

Hygiene & Cleaning

Children's personal hygiene routines will be enforced by school staff as an integral part of their day and each of our 28 primary academies (and nurseries) have been provided with hygiene lesson plans and posters.

We would encourage all parents to access the [eBug](#) learning resources to help prepare children for their return to school.

Each setting is undergoing a more rigorous cleaning schedule to ensure that all high-risk areas such as door handles, handrails etc. are being cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis throughout the day.

Group Sizes, Social Distancing & Staggered Timings

It is important to reduce contact between people as much as possible. We can help achieve this and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children and staff where possible, only mix in a small, consistent group and that each small group stays away from other people and other groups.

Staffing

It will not surprise you to hear that we will be operating on reduced staffing capacity as we still have staff who are shielding, self-isolating or unable to attend for other reasons because of the current set of circumstances.

Please be aware it is not possible for all children to be able to come back to their familiar teacher or adults. We will work to ensure there is at least one familiar adult available to the children but this cannot be guaranteed.

Small Groups – ‘Pods’

- All children will be grouped in ‘pods’ of no more than 10-15 children, depending on classroom sizes
- The staffing of each pod must be sufficient to meet the educational and safety needs of the children within it
- Children and staff will not move between or to another pod at any time, to ensure a reduction in the risk of transmission
- All pods will have a separate classroom, break times, lunch time, toilet access and hand washing facilities
- Outdoor education will be prioritised wherever possible
- If any child or adult shows symptoms of COVID-19, they will be immediately asked to arrange to be tested. If the test is positive, then the pod will close to all the staff and children within it, for seven days. A deep clean of the area will follow
- All nurseries/schools will focus on the wellbeing and safety of children first and foremost
- Procedures and systems in the nursery/school will be different, but we will always seek to minimise the emotional impact this may have on children

School Day

The school day will run from 8.30-3.30 with staggered start and finish times.

We will have reduced capacity to provide breakfast and after school clubs and will confirm between now and the start of June what (if anything) we will be able to offer in each school.

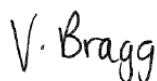
Transport to and from school

The government has issued full guidance on travelling during the pandemic. This can be found [HERE](#) and the link is also available on the Aspire website at <http://www.aspireacademytrust.org/coronavirus>

Your child’s nursery/school will be in touch once the survey is complete with confirmation whether your child(ren) has a place and if so, their plans for staggered pick up/drop off times and further detailed information on the new school day.

Finally, I would like to reassure you all again that all the procedures we have in place will enable us to continue to support you whilst protecting our staff and all the children in our care. If you or your child have any concerns or questions, please contact your child(ren)’s school.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "V. Bragg".

Vanessa Bragg
CEO
Aspire Academy Trust