



22nd May 2020

Dear parents and carers,

As we come to the end of another term, I wanted to communicate personally with all Minerva Primary Academy families. Following the government announcement about the possible phased re-opening of schools, we have been working closely with a range of experts across the trust to plan for a safe return for some pupils. The information set out below can provide you with more information about what we have been considering and planning for at MPA.

Health and safety

Following the completion of the trust-wide Risk Assessment, we have carried out individual site checks in each of our Academies. These site checks inform the detail of Academy Risk Assessments including safe physical capacity. We have tried to adhere as far as possible to the principles of social distancing in addition to the 'hierarchy of controls' measures outlined by the Government in its guidance. This means that our group sizes will be smaller than the maximum 15 stated in the DfE Guidance and that our Academies will not be full, even within the year groups scheduled to return. On the basis of this safe available capacity, places for children will be prioritised in line with our guiding principles i.e. preferencing vulnerable pupils and the children of Critical Workers in the first instance.

Place allocation

Since schools were repurposed on 23rd March, we have worked together to utilise our spaces in line with Government guidance to provide provision to those most in need; vulnerable children and children of critical workers. We have seen between 1-2% of students attending our Academies and we are aware that this low number is as result of the nation's efforts to 'stay at home', in line with Government recommendation. From June 1st the Government is actively encouraging children of critical workers to take up provision in schools and academies, and we expect to see an increase in attendance in line with that expected nationally - from 1/2% to 20%. For some of our academies this will mean that they quickly reach safe capacity. We will make allocation decisions in collaboration with families and will share more details about what our academies will look and feel like, in order for you to make an informed decision about returning to take a space. For the key year groups selected and shared in the Guidance; Early Years, 1 and 6, we have developed an offer that we hope will include a thorough review of learning etc.

Throughout the lockdown period we have been open for priority groups of children at our Begbrook hub. We will continue to offer full-time places in school for these children but these children would move back to Minerva Primary Academy. We are now preparing to widen provision to encourage more children described as vulnerable and children of 'critical workers'

Wider reopening

Whilst we are planning in earnest for wider re-opening, we need to consider three key factors to ensure safety for pupils, staff and families. Pupil numbers, available space and staff availability need to be taken in to account before we can provide you with a comprehensive plan.

In addition, the next formal update from the Government with regard to their own safe measures is not due to take place until Thursday 28th May so all plans and places are provisional up until confirmation from Academies after this point/at the start of term on 1st June.



Reopening timeline

In line with the government guidance, all primary academies will prepare for the widening of provision by opening their buildings from 1st June. Academies will continue to meet the needs of Critical Workers and our most vulnerable children during those first three days of term (the children who have been attending our Begbrook hub up to this point). Time has been dedicated for staff training and induction to support all staff who will be coming onto site from 1st June. This means academies will open more widely from 4th June at the earliest. We will only reopen when it is safe and proper to do so.

Timetabling

On a Wednesday, MPA will be closed to all but essential critical worker places and those children that the Government would be including in their vulnerable children list – namely those with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or involvement with Social Care. This is to allow the learning space to undergo an enhanced clean, for leadership and teaching teams to review the dynamic risk assessment and to allow time for planning and preparation of learning on-site and the distance learning provision for the majority of our pupils, who are still currently learning from home.

Currently the school has no plan to provide a wrap around club before or after school. Start times for different groups of children will be staggered as will pick up and lunch times. This will ensure that we prevent different groups of children and adults mixing. For those children that will be invited in more details of exact timing will be provided in the first few days of term 6.

What the provision on site will look and feel like

For those children that are invited to return, Minerva Primary Academy will look and feel different. Children will remain in the same small group throughout the day and term 6. They will not necessarily be taught by their own class teacher or be in their own classroom. Classrooms will be set up to support social distancing and each child will have their own resource pack to support learning. Teachers will continue to support children with a high quality educational experience whilst supporting them to reconnect with each other and develop their sense of self and place.

Distance learning

Our distance learning on our year group WordPress sites and MPA YouTube channel will continue to provide quality learning for those children remaining at home. Over time, the learning platform that is being developed centrally by expert teachers from across the trust will be used more widely to support you and your child. These resources will be written to support our CLF wide curriculum. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all families for their high levels of engagement, quality feedback and communication about the learning that has been taking place in home across our communities.

We will be working hard to respond to the advice as it is published. Once we are able to do so, we will provide you with further information and plans that ensure the safety of our children, staff and whole community in the coming weeks and months.

Thank you, as ever, for your continued support at this difficult time.

Jenny Harvey

Vice Principal