



# GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

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Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and your families are well and are staying safe in these very difficult times.

You will be aware that there is a lot of national debate about the Government's aim to have more children in schools from June 1<sup>st</sup>. I would like you to know that there is nothing we want more than our children to be back with us in our academies. However, the **safety of our children, their families and our staff is our number one priority** and so we have been working extremely hard to consider how to do this appropriately.

Please be patient with us. Each academy is unique, with different classroom layouts, size of rooms and availability of staff, so we need to make academy-by-academy decisions about how this next phase of education provision will look. I will not make any decision that in my professional judgement puts the safety of our children and my colleagues at risk.

If it remains the Government's intention to open schools to more children, your child's Principal will write to you during the **week commencing 1st June** to give you more details. They will also give you more information about how home learning will be supported at this time. If the Government ask us to, I can confirm that **some of our academies will be ready to start to accept more children from 8th June**. It is highly unlikely that all academies will be open to Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 at the same time.

We will, of course, continue to provide emergency childcare for key workers and our most vulnerable children throughout this time, including for most academies, during the half term period.

However, if considerably more children are to be attending our academies, their experience in school will be different and I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to some of these issues:

- The Trust has carried out detailed risk assessments and assessed the maximum capacity per academy and per classroom. It is highly unlikely that the suggested 15 children per class will be able to be safely accommodated in one classroom. This figure is likely to be closer to 8 children per classroom and will be lower in some academies.
- Children will find it very difficult to independently social distance themselves from others. Whilst we will do our utmost to ensure that social distancing occurs in our academies, **I cannot guarantee that your child will maintain social distancing at all times**. This is in line with Government advice.

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- It is also possible that your child will not be taught by their usual class teacher and will be working with staff members less familiar to them.
- Children will not be able to mix with others outside their group in the playground or at lunchtime.
- Different arrangements for drop offs and collections are likely to have to be implemented that support social distancing and your complete cooperation with these is requested. In addition, some academies we will need to stagger opening times.
- We will not be able to provide our usual curriculum offer, equipment cannot be shared and children will not be able to move freely around the classroom and the academy.
- It is possible that your child will see their teachers in PPE, especially if administering first aid.
- In addition, there will be no physical contact between academy staff and your child. Many of our young children will need to be reminded of this as they often seek regular physical contact as a means of reassurance. **Staff will not be allowed to hug children, even if they are in distress.**

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but I hope it gives you an idea of how very different your child's academy will have to be when they return. If the time comes, it is essential you talk to your child so they have some understanding about how different in appearance and 'feel' their classroom will be. Each academy will communicate to you how this will look and any new 'rules' that will have to be in place in order for everyone to remain safe. All of the arrangements will be in line with Government guidance.

I encourage parents and carers to think very carefully about what is right for their own child if they are given the opportunity to attend in the future. If you make the decision to send your child back to their academy we will, as ever, do everything we can to provide the best possible experience for your child. If you make the decision that you want to keep your child at home at this uncertain time, then please be assured that we respect this decision. It will not impact on your child having a place at our academy in the future nor will you be pressured about non-attendance or fined.

As a parent of three children under 8 I understand that this might be a very difficult decision for you to make. **Whatever decision you make will be the right one, you know your child best and I will totally respect and support whatever you decide to do.**

Take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely



**Wayne Norrie**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Greenwood Academies Trust**

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