



# Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

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Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to you today with further updates following the most recent announcements from the government. Whilst there is still a lot of uncertainty about the re-opening of schools and still many questions that have yet to be answered, we have well-advanced plans for schools to return in June. It would appear that Years R, 1 and 6 will be the first year groups back in schools and the government has suggested this could be from June 1<sup>st</sup>. Secondary schools will remain largely closed until September, with the exception of Years 10 and 12, who may begin to return from June 1<sup>st</sup>, particularly if they have not been engaging well in home learning. On Tuesday, the government issued some clear advice for schools to help support the possible re-opening, which I am using along with that from professional associations, and other organisations to try and chart our return to some form of normality.

I would ask at this point for your patience and understanding as the burden on schools is becoming quite significant at the moment. Staff are preparing home-learning for children, teaching the children of key workers and vulnerable children in schools, communicating regularly with parents/carers, as well as conducting the normal business in school and preparing for next academic year.

## Updates and planning for re-opening:

### 1) PPE

The Trust has now taken delivery of 10,000 masks, a similar number of gloves, 3 pallets of hand sanitiser and visors. These will be made available to schools during the course of the next two weeks to boost school stocks and be used where staff feel it is sensible to do so. PPE is not compulsory and indeed, the government says it is generally not required in school settings.

### 2) Risk Assessments have been prepared by the Trust HR team to help us consider the safety of all staff and children on school sites. These will remain constantly under review as the situation in schools evolves.

### 3) Social Distancing

The Trust has purchased tape to mark out floor areas to guide children and staff with social distancing. We are also constructing from materials we have in stock, portable hand sanitiser stations for each school. Headteachers have been asked to create social distancing routes in schools, arrange classrooms to meet requirements of social distancing, staggered drop-off and collection times of children by parents/carers, etc. We are also considering if Year 6 could be taught on the secondary school sites, to ease congestion in schools and help with transition. Each school will need its own unique plan, but we have created a planning tool to help schools with this at Trust level. **It is important for us to be absolutely clear with parents and carers that we do not believe it will be possible to maintain social distancing of 2 metres at all times with 4 and 5 year old children in particular. We will endeavour to achieve this, but recognise that it is a significant challenge as by their very nature, children are inquisitive and want to socialise and be close to their peers and staff.**

### 4) Curriculum Planning

As well as planning for the logistics of social distancing, school leaders are also planning the curriculum changes that will be required to ease children back into school. We want schools to follow the Trust guidance on this in Term 6, so that we know the right level of nurture and support is being applied.





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### 5) Transport and school lunches

We envisage that transport will remain in place for those children who require it to get to and from school. Bus companies etc. are taking appropriate measures to ensure social distancing. School lunches will be provided for free school meal children in school. These will be packed lunches only, to allow dining spaces to be used for social distancing measures.

We would ask that parents/carers of no free school meal children to provide packed lunches for their children until we have catering staff back in schools.

### 6) Setting of work for children not in school:

We will continue to set work for children not in school. However, in the primary settings, we will be aiming to arrange this centrally so that all staff can be in school to help with social distancing. For year groups that are expected to return to school, no work will be set, except if a child is required to shield.

### 7) Cleaning in schools

is being stepped up with a particular focus on door handles, hard surfaces, etc. We are discussing with our cleaners changes to shift patterns to provide school-time cleaning to keep sites as clean as possible. Materials for cleaning will be available for all staff to use.

**Primary Schools will be closing after the morning session on Friday of each week to ensure there is time for a deep clean, allow for further planning and re-arrangement of working practices for the coming week. Children of Critical Workers and those considered vulnerable will still be permitted to attend Friday afternoons.**

### 8) Parent survey

Schools will shortly be asking you as parents/carers if you intend to send your children in to school on the 1<sup>st</sup> June. This will help with the planning going forward.

### 9) Whitsun half-term

Schools in the Trust will not be open over Whitsun half-term. Many staff have been working in school since February, including some weekends without a break. Clearly we want them to be refreshed and ready for the return of children from June 1<sup>st</sup>.

### 10) Trips and activity weeks planned for the summer term

I am confirming as of today that all trips and activity week visits in the summer term are cancelled and we will arrange for refunds over the next few weeks.

Next week each individual primary school in the Trust will communicate to parents the arrangements they have made for the safe return of children on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Secondary schools will also be contacting parents/carers to confirm arrangements for Years 10 and 12.

Obviously we will keep all aspects of our school preparations under review and take feedback from staff, parents and carers. As a final point, please be aware that if there are insufficient staff available in schools to look after children, we will write to inform you how this will disrupt plans to open schools in June. A number of staff in the Trust are required to shield and this creates staffing difficulties, particularly when we require more staff than ever to ensure social distancing.

Many thanks for your continued support and hard work as parents and carers at home.

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams  
CEO

