

19 March 2020

Dear colleague,

I felt I would reach out to you, to thank you as you attend and continue to balance the moral and professional dilemma you go through each day. I can only offer my gratitude on behalf of us all.

You will have heard the announcement that all schools will be closed from the end of Friday this week. This decision is sad news for all communities and a particularly challenging decision for our schools and staff as we grapple with the news that schools must take all reasonable measures to stay open for vulnerable groups including pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (nationally 3% in mainstream and 100% in special settings) and disadvantaged children (68% of our trust cohort). Also, to maintaining provision for children of “key workers”. We are also grappling with an expectation that schools will aim to remain open during the Easter break.

**Schools will be stay open throughout the Easter holidays to support the children of key workers and "at risk" children, the Education Secretary said.**

Gavin Williamson added that schools and further education institutions will need to work together to support these children and young people.

He also guaranteed that the government will cover all additional costs run by schools to ensure this provision.

I have no fixed view on our special and alternative provision from next week, but rest assured guidance from Principals will follow today.

From my understanding today, there will be no primary assessment. GCSEs and A-levels will be awarded based on moderated assessment, with the exam boards and Ofqual. For those young people who feel that they could have done better than their predicted grade, I believe there will be mini-session in the Autumn.

Leaders from across the trust are meeting with me today to discuss the next stage of our contingency planning, and they will be communicating this to you today. I ask that you please consider your safety and be prepared to respond to an enquiry from your Principals later about the likelihood of your attendance from next week. I acknowledge these are personally challenging times for all but hope you understand we must balance this with our public service to support keyworkers (in particular NHS staff) in their ability to attend work and not manage their childcare.

In these final two full days of “normal operation,” I ask that you continue to pull together as we have done so successfully up to this point. I anticipate a significant time ahead. Thank you to you all – you have been amazing. Together as a community, we will support one another and endeavour to help our wonderful pupils and families over the coming weeks and months.

I believe the future will “rebalance” the importance of schools in their communities and redefine the term “Outstanding”.

I have attached a range of links you may find useful as we move into this difficult next phase and ask that you ensure your Academy has up to date contact information for you all.

I wish you well and leave you with this final thought I caught online, that I know will be in your minds.

“most young children will remember  
**how their families and schools felt during this coronavirus panic**  
More than anything specific about the virus.

Our children are watching us and learning about  
How to respond to stress and uncertainty

**Let’s wire our children for resilience, not panic”**

Yours sincerley

Sean Kelly  
Chief Executive Officer