



The Consortium Trust

Where together excellence and pupils thrive

Newsletter to Parents and Carers 5th November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

As I am sure you are aware, on Saturday evening, the Prime Minister gave a Downing Street press conference, alongside Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Patrick Vallance and Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty, to announce a four-week national lockdown in England from Thursday 5th November until 2nd December. The Prime Minister's statement is [available here](#) and slides to accompany Saturday's coronavirus press conference are [available here](#). More information about the new national restrictions which come into force on 5th November can be found [here](#).

I wish to pay tribute yet again to the sterling efforts of all staff across the Trust, during these uncertain and worrying times. As a Trust we have shown resilience throughout the pandemic and I am certain that we will pull through this next phase successfully. I assure you that everyone has the single aim to navigate through the next four weeks and potentially beyond putting the health and well-being of our whole school community first. There will undoubtedly be challenges and possible disagreements ahead and we will need to pick a compromise route that balances the Trust's legal obligation to deliver effective education as close to normal as we can, while acknowledging requests and expectations of our staff and the wider school community including you as parents.

In his statement the Prime Minister announced childcare, early year's settings, schools, colleges and universities will be kept open to prioritise children and young people's education and wellbeing. The Trust's Critical Incident Team (CIT) are now meeting weekly and will be monitoring all the guidance coming out and responding as quickly as we can. I can confirm that the following decisions have been made/undertaken:

1. All schools are currently reviewing the Risk Assessments and these will be, approved and then posted on the school websites.
2. Where staff receive letters to shield (clinically exceptionally vulnerable), we will be offering those colleagues the opportunity to carry on working but away from the school environment. Where this creates staffing gaps in the school – we will fill those gaps with the most appropriate provision that we are able to secure, as quickly as possible.
3. All non-essential face to face activities are stopped with immediate effect (please note the definitions of essential and non-essential below), to minimise the amount of contact.
4. Essential is deemed to be pupil focused, i.e. teaching, coaching, and mentoring. This includes the provision of interventions and curriculum enrichment activities by school based or central team colleagues. It also includes the monitoring of standards in our settings. Therefore members of school and executive leadership teams are permitted to undertake a range of monitoring practices including observations, book looks and professional discussions. All must be conducted in a Covid-secure way.
5. Non-essential is adult focused activities, including meetings, EYFS inductions (Kirkley Nursery), moderation and staff training events that should all be moved to digital platforms or rescheduled.
6. Statutory training that includes, fire safety, first aid and safeguarding where this cannot be delivered virtually should continue to be planned and delivered throughout this period. Again additional measures will be considered to minimise contact.
7. In line with government instructions the Central office at Halesworth will be closed.

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8. While we have a duty to monitor the attendance of pupils registered, I can assure parents that the Trust is committed to working with you. Action plans will be required for pupils that are not attending, as school is deemed to be the most appropriate place for children. We have made our facilities as covid-secure as possible but I recognise that some parents may remain anxious. Where school and home is working together we will not look to punitive measures.
9. Our virtual school and digital learning platforms are ready to provide next day provision in the event of a total or partial school closure. Parents are advised that teacher focus must be on providing the best quality provision to children that are attending school, therefore we are unable to offer a comprehensive learning experience to pupils where parents decide to keep them off school, while we remain open. In this eventuality school staff will be able to signpost parents to digital resources.

As a Trust, we will continue to provide the vital public service that we are tasked to do. I have recorded below some hyperlinks to government guidance that you may find useful.

Links to guidance documents:

- [Guidance for early years and childcare providers](#)
- [Guidance for schools](#)
- [Guidance for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings](#)
- [New national restrictions from 5 November](#)
- [Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

I sincerely hope that all parents and carers are aware that as a Trust we will continue to do whatever we can collectively to ensure that we hold true to our core purpose. Providing exceptional provision to the communities that we serve. It is important to all of us that we feel supported and valued, please feel free to discuss any concerns that you have with your Academy Head, Nursery Manager or me directly. Please ensure that all conversations are courteous and respectful.

In closing, thank you for your understanding and support. I hope that you stay safe and happy during this period of national restrictions and let's all hope that the infection rates are suppressed and a vaccine is found very soon.

Kind regards

Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne
CEO & Principal