

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Our schools across the country are facing extremely challenging times and we are so proud of the way in which our Leaders and all our staff have worked hard to plan and prepare for their changing role. We felt as a Trust that we would write to each and every one of you to reassure you that all 59 of our schools will continue to support your children with the provision of work and projects that they can complete at home, or with a range of activities provided through our childcare facilities.

The schools, as educational establishments, temporarily closed their doors on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and this Monday have opened their doors as a childcare facility to support families who fall into one of the three Government designated groups below and who have no alternative childcare:

- Key Workers (as identified by the Government)
- Those children with social workers
- Those children who have an Educational Health Care Plan

If you are one of the parents using our childcare facility, due to the numbers of staff in each school who are either having to self-isolate or have medical conditions, your child/children will not necessarily have their normal staff members working with them. The Government has relinquished the staffing ratios normally applied to Early Years settings and therefore some of our younger children are also likely to be in slightly larger groups than normal.

We wanted to inform you that none of our schools will be teaching the national curriculum in its entirety, but will be creating timetables by which to operate by, which will be more activity based. However, we will continue to operate the majority of school policies with the exception of e.g. Attendance, Teaching and Learning and Collective Worship. Policies that establish operational working practices within the school and clarify a school's expectations e.g. Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies, will continue to operate.

We are presently planning (as asked by the Government), wherever possible to offer Easter holiday childcare and schools will be communicating with you their plans for this provision in the near future. We have been working with our catering teams and contractors to ensure that we provide each childcare facility with pre-prepared packed-lunches for all families eligible for free school meals and those wishing to purchase a lunch for their child/children. In the first instance these may be hot meals, whilst existing food stocks are used up. We also intend to provide a packed-lunch to all children who are entitled to a free school meal (where parents are on benefits) and these will be available for collection from the school site at specified times to avoid large groups of children and adults congregating at the same time.

We will continue to open the childcare facility at our schools whilst we are able to do so, but this may be adversely affected if there are:

- Staff shortages in general;
- Staff shortages of those with paediatric first aid training for our Nursery and EYFS children (a DfE requirement);
- An outbreak of diagnosed Coronavirus amongst the staff or children;
- Government instruction to close;

- Health England instruction to close.

If staff shortages do affect our ability to offer the child care facility we would first consider reducing the number of children in attendance by prioritising the key worker criteria e.g. the removal of the childcare facility for those parents/carers where there is only one key worker at home, not two. Please rest assured, we will always have the safety and well-being of REACH2's children and staff at the heart of any decision we make. Any decision to close our childcare facilities would be taken by Executives in consultation with school leaders.

The very best action that you can take as a parent, wherever possible, is to keep your child at home and adhere to the Government plea of social distancing. We ask that you only use the school's childcare facilities if and when you need to so that we too can limit the risk to our children and especially our staff who are very much on the front-line.

Thank you for your support.

Yours faithfully,



Sir Steve Lancashire

Chief Executive Officer, REACH2 Academy Trust