



**BDMAT**  
Birmingham Diocesan  
Multi-Academy Trust

**Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust**  
**1 Colmore Row,**  
**Birmingham**  
**B3 2BJ**  
[www.bdmatschools.com](http://www.bdmatschools.com)

18<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

As you are probably aware, your child's school is a member of the Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust (BDMAT). As it is BDMAT that supports this school I wanted to inform you of our plans for reopening our schools over the coming weeks. I apologise that this is a lengthy letter but there is a great deal of important information that you need to be aware of.

Firstly, I wanted to start by publicly thanking all of the staff in our schools for keeping our schools open throughout the lockdown period for vulnerable children and the children of key workers; they have achieved this whilst continuing to set work online, feeding back to your children and making regular contact with children at home. Our headteachers have been working tirelessly to keep some form of education going for all whilst also juggling so many other aspects, including the distribution of food parcels and / or vouchers to those families most in need. Throughout the crisis our cleaners and site staff have ensured that our schools have been kept spotlessly clean and there have been no outbreaks of the virus in any of our schools. I have been so impressed with the dedication of all our staff. If you have a story to tell about your child's teacher or school that you feel has gone 'above and beyond' I would love to hear about it and will pass on your gratitude to them – please follow this link to the form <https://bit.ly/bdmat-feedback>

The reopening of schools from the 1<sup>st</sup> June is not without controversy which is why I wanted you to be aware of what we are doing to ensure the safety of your children, our staff and our wider communities.

From 1<sup>st</sup> June our schools will start to reopen to pupils on a phased approach. The decisions about reopening your school will be made by your headteacher in consultation with your governing body as they know your pupils and families best. The government has stated that pupils in nursery, reception, Year 1 and Year 6 can begin to return from 1<sup>st</sup> June but we will not be having all of these pupils in together to start. We feel that it is important to start to increase numbers into our schools slowly so that we can ensure that systems are in place and working and that the risk to your children and staff is as low as possible. Therefore, by the end of this week your child's headteacher will be writing to you to set out the plan for the week of 1<sup>st</sup> June and stating which pupils will be in each day that week. During the week of 1<sup>st</sup> June it is likely that your school will be operating shortened days for the pupils. Towards the end of that week, when we are sure the systems are all working appropriately, they will contact you

again to outline the plans for the following week. The staff from the BDMAT Central Team, including myself will be visiting schools regularly during the week commencing 1<sup>st</sup> June to monitor what is happening and to ensure that schools are as safe as they can be.

Let's be clear, schools will look very different places for the rest of this academic year and there are certain new regulations that we are putting in place across our schools from 1<sup>st</sup> June:

- Children with a temperature, cough or cold like symptoms will not be allowed into school – parents must tell us if their child starts to experience any of these symptoms
- If a child lives in a household where anyone is showing these symptoms, they must keep their child at home
- If your child starts to feel unwell with any of the above symptoms whilst in school, they will be immediately isolated and you will be contacted to come and collect your child immediately
- To start with, children will not allowed to bring anything into school – the exception to this will be those children who normally bring a packed-lunch. These children will be allowed to bring a small, disposable bag with their lunch in only. All children should also bring a bottle of water each day, clearly labelled as they will not have access to cups or water fountains during the day.
- Parents and other adults will not be allowed on to the school site – this is to ensure the safety of all children and we ask that you abide by this. Your child's school will inform you of the arrangements for dropping-off and collecting your children. Communication with the school must be by telephone or email. Please do not try to engage your child's teacher or other staff in conversation at the beginning or end of the day – their responsibility will be to closely supervise the children at this time

Your child's school may have other regulations that they need to put in place depending on their school site etc.

We know that black, Asian and minority ethnic groups have been particularly badly affected by the coronavirus. Parents from these communities are therefore likely to have heightened anxieties. We are working closely with staff that serve large populations of BAME pupils to ensure that they are aware of your concerns and that they can give you reassurances that the school is safe to return to.

When the children are in school they will be kept in a 'bubble' and only interact with those children in that group – there will be a maximum of 15 in each of these bubbles – this may be considerably lower depending on the size of the classroom they are going to be allocated. These children will work together in the classroom, go to lunch together and play together. It will not be possible to move children in or out of these bubbles. We ask that parents stick to the timetable for their child to be in school and do not opt for which sessions they would like their child to attend as this will make it very difficult for work continuity for the children and establishing routines, as well as protecting everyone.

Your child's usual teacher and teaching assistant may not be available to work currently. This could be for a variety of reasons, including the member of staff's own health or circumstances. As we will also have a maximum number of 15 children in each bubble, it will mean that we will have to call upon staff from other year groups to teach. If your child has special educational needs and receives support from a teaching assistant it may mean that for the next few weeks, or months we are unable to give them the level of support that we would normally – we ask parents to liaise with their child's school over these individual cases.

Since the crisis began, we have increased cleaning in schools – including during the day when the children are in school. We will continue this for the foreseeable future.

As we will require staff from other year groups to help deliver teaching in our nurseries, reception, Year 1 and Year 6 we are unlikely to be able to keep the same level of remote teaching going for those children still at home. Therefore, in line with government guidelines we ask that parents access learning from BBC Bitesize (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>) and the online government academy Oaks Academy (<https://www.thenational.academy/>) where possible.

I have been extremely grateful to our staff who have kept our schools running every day since the start of the crisis. We have been able to offer education to those that needed it either in your child's school or in one of our hub schools each weekday throughout this period, including bank holidays and the Easter break. In order that we can prepare our schools and the lessons to deliver to your children from 1<sup>st</sup> June we have decided to close all our schools during the half-term holiday. In the interest of pupil and staff safety I am sure that you can see the importance of this.

We are committed to getting your children back to school in a safe way and we feel that a phased approach with children on a rota, at least during the first week is the right approach. You may hear of other schools near to you that are opening fully to the selected year groups from 1<sup>st</sup> June. Each school though is different as each will have different numbers of staff shielding and their buildings may allow easier circulation of pupils etc.

The government has an ambition that all primary pupils will be back in school for at least one month before the end of the summer term. They have stated that this will be dependant on a continued decrease of the COVID-19 virus across the country. When we know more about the government's plans we will be in touch again with you.

We understand that the decision whether to send your child to school may be difficult; we hope we have provided some reassurance with all the protective measures in place. Children will be invited to return to school however the decision remains with yourself.

Thank you for the support you are showing to our school staff and taking the time to read through this lengthy letter. Can I remind you again, if you want to feedback positive news about the staff in our schools to me please follow this link: <https://bit.ly/bdmat-feedback>

Your faithfully

*C. D. Mansell*

Christopher Mansell  
Chief Executive Officer

