

Dear parent/carer

I hope you and your families are well.

You will be aware that from Friday 20th March 2020 all schools have been closed. The exception to this has been for vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers, as defined by the government. All the schools in the Trinity Trust have remained open as requested, and I am delighted to say that we currently provide a safe, educational provision for the highest number of key worker children in the borough.

However, and this is a crucial point, we need to ensure that provision is resilient and can remain open for the long haul (if required). For that reason we have supported the development of a 'hub model', planning with like-minded partners to ensure that we get something both established, well in advance of need. I will try to explain why that is so, what it looks like, and what it means to you.

Why set it up?

In short, to ensure that we can remain open for as long as we can.

When the school announcement was made, secondary schools were in a stronger position than primary schools, for two reasons: The first is that secondary schools have a higher number of staff; the second is that, due to the age of their pupils (and therefore their ability to look after themselves), secondary schools were asked to remain open for a lower number of pupils. A number of secondary schools placed their staff on rotas (to work from home, planning and assessing pupil work; or to attend and educate the remaining pupils).

Primary schools did the same, albeit on a smaller scale i.e. not as many staff. However, as mentioned above, they had more pupils (on average), and so played an even more critical role. The difficulties for primary schools will arise when a number of key staff become unavailable quickly (either for self-isolation or because of illness). It may be the site manager, pastoral staff or senior leadership – it doesn't really matter, the vulnerabilities are numerous. Whilst some primary schools would limp along for a period of time, when the number of unavailable staff start to climb steeply, the inevitable answer (for a standalone primary with limited staffing back-up) would be to close. That means key workers have to remain home, which of course none of us want to see happen.

Take a hub model, based at the local secondary school as an example, which incorporates pupils from both primary and secondary schools. It has a much larger building, wider corridors, more classrooms and so on, thereby ensuring effective social distancing. However, it still only requires one site manager to open and close it (bearing in mind his/her job is not 'business as usual' either), whereas each of the smaller providers also needed one each. The same can be said of pastoral staff, teachers, senior leaders, admin, finance and so on – the provision remains robust; the staffing rota is strengthened considerably (as all partners play their part); staff who are not needed stay at home, adhering to national guidance.

Importantly, when the worst of this arrives and a high number of staff are unavailable, we will have created a resilient system in advance; our safe learning environment will remain open and available to vulnerable pupils and the children of our key workers.

Finally on the 'why' question, I attach a document circulated today from a Public Health Consultant from Calderdale LA (in response to four key questions raised by Headteachers about the development of hubs). I think it gives a useful oversight of why LAs the length and breadth of the country are trying to support their development as a priority.

What does it look like?

To start with, I again stress that we have supported and encouraged a cross-phase hub model across the borough, in partnership with the LA. Whilst some colleagues have embraced this, unfortunately others have not and so the geographical picture remains incomplete. If there were a more local solution for St Chad's e.g. Brighthouse High School, or a neighbouring cluster of primary schools, I would be gratefully promoting that. However, a more local offer has not been forthcoming and so the St Chad's proposed hub will be **Trinity Academy Halifax** (HX2 9TZ).

Why Trinity Academy Halifax (TAH)?

- It was built to accommodate 1800 pupils, and at present has fewer than 30 pupils (in total) attending. Space, as mentioned above, is not an issue and effective social distancing has been implemented and adhered to easily.
- Pupils from Akroydon Primary Academy (APA), the other primary school in the Trust, have been attending TAH since Monday 30th March (and are included in the 30 above). This was planned for in advance, including:
 - The part of the building allocated for primary provision was deep cleaned;
 - Relevant primary furniture and other resources were transported to TAH;
 - It is staffed, from senior leadership to teaching and wider support staff, by APA staff members. Nonetheless, whilst the building is operating on a skeleton staffing model, the primary provision is supported by Trinity Trust staff e.g. reception, admin, site, catering and so on.

It is working really well, with positive feedback from staff, parents and the pupils themselves.

- It is providing a safe, worthwhile educational experience – my second and final attachment is a model timetable of the provision we are able to provide. It is far in excess of what any provider could do alone e.g. specialist staffing from the secondary provision can be brought in (on a rota) to work (two metres) alongside the primary staff to offer a far more stimulating and productive week. Finally, I would stress that group sizes are small (approximately 4 pupils) to ensure we can safely adhere to social distancing guidelines at all times.

What does it mean to you?

Hopefully minimal change and only positive things.

Transport:

Thanks to the LA, we have managed to organise a bus as follows (factoring in 15 minutes transport time to and from St Chad's Primary Academy and TAH):

Morning: Collection (SCPA) 7.45am – arrival (TAH) 8.00am; Collection (SCPA) 8.40am – arrival (TAH) 8.55am

Afternoon: Collection (TAH) 3.00pm – arrival (SCPA) 3.15pm; Collection (TAH) 5.00pm – arrival (SCPA) 5.15pm

Note: As we have small numbers at SCPA, social distancing measures will be in force on all journeys.

Therefore we can still offer both before and after school clubs, as well as ensuring parents/carers are not inconvenienced at all with an additional journey. We can also guarantee that our current provision will continue over the Easter holidays, inclusive of the Bank Holidays.

Staffing:

Both journeys, as well as the school day, will be staffed by current St Chad's teachers/support staff who currently know and care for your children. Additional Trust staff, albeit a minimum of people for obvious reasons, will also provide support along the SCPA staff.

Communication:

As you will expect, from our perspective this will be explained to the pupils in a very positive way e.g. a new exciting part of their school life that will allow them to see 'the big school' and have a fun time. We would be very appreciative if parents could also be positive about this development – if the children are reassured, I am sure they will have an enjoyable and productive experience.

We aim to start the provision at TAH from Friday 3rd April, so that things are fully embedded and working well (and everyone has done that first day!) from Monday 6th April onwards.

Note: If you only want to access the provision for either a morning or afternoon, you will be required to arrange alternative transport to TAH to facilitate that.

If there are any questions regarding this, please do not hesitate to contact us on info@trinityacademyhalifax.org

Just to confirm, Wednesday and Thursday of this week will continue as normal. Our SCPA staff will be waiting for you on Friday 3rd April (both at 7.45am and 8.40am), ready to board the bus to TAH.

Thank you for your continuing support



Michael Gosling
CEO – Trinity MAT