

10 July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As with all of my letters, I wish to begin by thanking you for your continued support and understanding during these difficult times. This is much appreciated. I have total empathy with the challenges you have faced and my sincere thanks are echoed by all Wensum Trust staff.

Since the guidance for schools reopening was published last week, school leaders and staff have been working tirelessly to formulate plans to safely open all schools in September. These plans are progressing well and are fully aligned to government expectations. Detailed risk assessments are, once again, being completed to cover every school context with plans for all scenarios being made. The risk assessments we are using align to the Local Authority's guidelines and are lengthy, detailed documents.

Rest assured that these risk assessments are formulated by school leaders in conjunction with all staff. Each school's risk assessment will be quality assured by Wensum Trust staff and will go through a lengthy process of challenge before being signed off by school governors and finally our Trustees. We do not envisage any problems with all children returning to school in September but we need to make you aware that our primary schools will be replacing hot dinners with school packed lunches for the first couple of weeks. Hot dinners present many challenges that we will overcome, but for the sake of the children feeling safe, secure and at ease, packed lunches to begin with is the way forward. Children entitled to universal free school meals will also be provided with packed lunches.

With regard to the well documented challenge that many children may have fallen behind with their school work, this is being addressed and planned for in each of our schools. Whilst we want children to catch up quickly, our immediate priority in September is to welcome them back, ensure they feel safe and secure and acknowledge that this has been a challenging time. We want them to know that we have missed them and that we have plans in place for whatever further challenges we might face. Only when children feel safe and secure, are they ready to learn and at that point we will start our plans to find and fill the gaps in learning. The primary focus has to be on social and emotional wellbeing. I hope this offers you further reassurance.

We also want you to know that we will continue monitoring what happens with Covid-19 throughout the summer. We have planned for every scenario we can think of so that we can react and respond to changing situations. At all times, we put the children first.

Next week you will receive a letter from your child's school. This will outline, in more detail, the plans that have been made for how school will open safely and what school will look like in September. I hope this insight will offer you further reassurance and comfort.

Everything about Covid-19 is challenging. We do know that it will continue to impact family life for many months to come. We will continue to offer support for all our children, families and communities.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Thrower  
CEO, The Wensum Trust