

THE WIDER REOPENING OF CITY OF YORK SCONDAARY SCHOOLS

A letter to all staff on behalf of the York Schools and Academies Board (YSAB)

19 May 2020

Dear colleague

The gradual wider reopening of schools across York

You will be all too aware of the national debate surrounding the decision to reopen schools to more children gradually, as long as the government's key safety criteria – known as the five tests¹ – are met. Since the Prime Minister's announcement, there has been a great deal of government guidance issued and schools across the country are working to see how the intention to open schools more widely might be realised.

In York, all schools and academies have been meeting online as the York Schools and Academies Board regularly to formulate our response collectively, in the interests of everyone in our school communities. We want to make it clear that we will only open our schools to more pupils if we are satisfied the risks have been minimised according to government guidance. Vulnerable students and children of essential workers will continue to attend school in the same way as they are currently.

The health and safety of staff and pupils is the guiding principle in every decision we make. Consequently, school leadership teams are listening to the concerns regarding returning to school which some of you have expressed on your completed YSAB Staff Information Forms, and we are all taking extensive measures to minimise any risks to staff and students when we open more widely.

After meeting earlier this evening secondary headteachers have agreed a number of key messages to be shared across our school communities relating to the wider reopening of our schools across York:

- 1. The overriding priority of headteachers, the Local Authority and Academy Trusts across the city is the safety of staff and students and the city is very much adopting a collegiate approach to the situation in which we find ourselves.*
- 2. As such schools are carefully and cautiously planning for a wider opening from Monday 8th June, with the week prior to this being used for preparation and planning; training staff on the new school operational procedures will be a crucial element of this preparatory week.*
- 3. Whilst individual arrangements may vary in each school, face-to-face interaction in all our secondary schools will be on a part-time basis with provision designed to supplement online learning.*
- 4. We also recognise that the majority of students, those in Years 7 to 9, will not return to school this academic year and we will continue to prioritise high quality academic and pastoral support for these students and their families.*

¹ FCO, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/foreign-secretarys-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-16-april-2020>

5. *At this time we would ask those families that can travel to and from school either by foot or by bike to do so, and if public transport needs to be used the necessary safety precautions are taken.*
6. *Our provision will be reviewed regularly, week-by-week, and feedback from colleagues as to how we can improve working conditions will be welcomed.*

As headteachers we take great pride in the professionalism, commitment and resilience of our staff at every level who are doing the best they can for our children's education and wellbeing in the most extraordinary of circumstances. We are also thankful for the support across our communities at this time.

With warmest best wishes,

Yours sincerely



John Tomsett (chair) on behalf of York Schools and Academies Board