

15<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear staff, parents and pupils

**Safe, Steady and Sustainable – a further message from BDAT about possible school re-opening to additional pupils.**

We wrote to you earlier in the week, and Mrs. Baxter has today, to let you know that we were starting to plan for some re-opening of schools to certain year groups. The Government has initially asked us to consider younger year groups (nursery, reception and year 1) followed by year 6 **if we can safely accommodate them**. Not all of our buildings will allow for all these year groups back safely at the same time.

We had hoped that we would be able to write to you with further information by the end of this week setting out your schools initial plan, however as late as 7pm yesterday evening the Government was continuing to publish additional safeguarding, health & safety and planning information.

We need to now take time to absorb this and factor it in to our individual school planning before we confirm and start to discuss re-opening plans with our parents.

Fundamentally though our position remains the same. Throughout all this **safety remains our highest priority**. We will not be pushed to re-open unless each of our schools is confident it can keep our children and our staff safe with greater numbers in our buildings. We will not rush now and regret later. We want any plan we put in place to be robust and sustainable so we all know what we are working to and what we can expect moving forward. We hope to be able to provide you with further detail next week

In the meantime, **your school remains open as it has in recent weeks - for the children of key workers and children deemed vulnerable only**. School will remain open for these children during half term and on the bank holiday Monday.

Although the Government has indicated they may not be providing free school meal vouchers during half term week, as a Trust and family of schools we think it is important that our families who need support continue to get food provision and each school is looking at plans to ensure our families are fed over the half term week. After half term we will continue to be providing free school meal vouchers for those who are eligible, and we are still awaiting to hear further guidance from the Government on the previously promised laptop scheme for some of our vulnerable families.

We look forward to seeing you back, but only when the time is right and safe.

Best wishes



**Carol Dewhurst OBE, Chief Executive Officer**