

# Swanland Education Trust

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[www.swanlandeducationtrust.co.uk](http://www.swanlandeducationtrust.co.uk)

Dear Parents and Carers

Mr Chris Huscroft  
Chief Executive Officer

It has been sometime since our last communication with you. I know from the many discussions with my colleagues that they have been working hard, alongside yourselves to ensure that you are being well supported throughout the current situation.

After the Prime Minister's announcement on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020, we are once again entering uncharted territory. The government are asking schools to begin wider opening of schools **from** 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020. They have suggested that in the first instance, children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 will be strongly encouraged to attend school.

The government have provided comprehensive guidance to schools. Unfortunately, the guidance is somewhat contradictory and gives us, as leaders some grave concerns about the ability to adequately safeguard children and staff under their guidance. What is really important to note is that what we have been provided with is guidance, not statutory. The guidance also clearly states that:

***“Each setting's circumstances will be slightly different. Any setting that cannot achieve these small groups at any point should discuss options with their local authority or trust. This might be because there are not enough classrooms or spaces available in the setting or because they do not have enough available teachers or staff to supervise the groups.”***

To that end, SET schools need to carefully calculate what can be offered, in regard to school places. We need to carry out these plans safely and cautiously, with the staff able to come back to school in our unique buildings and facilities. Staffing is a huge consideration for us, some are still unable to attend work, those that can currently, may not in the future and therefore we are going to have to be flexible in our approach. There may be occasions where it is not possible to have a group in. I have asked schools to 'audit' their spaces and be honest about the size and number of groups that can be accommodated in their buildings. In order to try and maintain social distancing, it is clear that 15 will be too many bodies in most of our spaces – we are therefore limiting group sizes to no more than 10, where spaces can accommodate this.

One of our first actions will be to calculate how many children would want a place in one of our schools. The government have said that children of key workers are able to take a place at school. It is therefore important that we know how many children of key worker parents need a place at school so that we can plan for how many other children we are able to take at any time with the space available. If you are a key worker of a child in year 2, 3, 4 or 5, please sign up in the usual way, your school will have sent out a link for you to complete.

We would now like to share with you some information, that as a Trust, we have agreed will be our minimum expectations on how we plan, at this stage to organise our schools from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 onwards.

### **Groups**

- It is important you know that it is highly likely your child **WILL NOT** have their class teacher. This may be owing to the fact that they can not yet return to work or that they are working with another group of children in the school.
- Groups will have no more than 10 children and may not be from their own class.
- Once established these groups **WILL NOT** change. They will work with the same children and group of adults until we are given an updated directive. The groups **WILL NOT** be allowed to mix with others in the school.
- As the children are unable to mix, start times, playtime, lunchtimes and pick-up times will have to be staggered as much as possible.
- In some schools, groups will be using the same toilets as other groups.
- Should staffing levels become too low at any point some classes may be asked not to be in school and this could be at short notice

### **Effective infection protection and control**

- The guidance states that where possible children should stay 2m apart but *“do not need to be 2m apart”*
- Social distancing **EVEN** with 10 children will be extremely difficult, we will not be able to keep children in a group of 10, 2m apart at all times. We think it important that you have this information and that we are honest and transparent.
- We will ensure cleaning of hands more often than usual – wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered.
- We will minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or have someone in their household who does, do not attend.  
Should anyone develop symptoms in your child’s group whilst in school, we will be asking all within that group to remain at home until a test has been taken and a negative result is received. At this point the group will be allowed back into school.
- We will ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach.
- Cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach.
- Children **WILL NOT** be able to share anything between groups though children within groups may be using the same equipment.
- We **WILL NOT** send anything home from school; please keep things that brought into school to an absolute minimum.
- Access to the school grounds and buildings will be severely restricted to anyone other than staff or children. Where possible, we intend to operate a no-contact system. Your own child’s school will communicate with you further about this in the coming weeks.

### **Education**

- The learning environment will have changed entirely. Children will have been used to working with partners on the carpet or in groups, moving around to help each other; this **WILL NOT** be possible.
- Children will sit one to a table with the next person two metres away at location in the room. This setup will require us to utilise classrooms that the children would not normally work in.

- Although the teaching style will have to change, learning will still be taking place at some level. It is likely the children in school will be doing the same or very similar work to that which will be sent home for those continuing with Home Learning.
- Children will be learning how to be more independent and get on with the learning themselves. This is so that we can support staff in being able to implement social distancing.
- We will aim to spend more time outside with the children (weather permitting!)
- Transition from Year 6 to Year 7 will be a challenge for schools; please do understand that in our schools this could be limited or in some instances not even possible. The schools are reliant on your child's destination school being able to engage with us. More details will follow once they know more.

### Travel

- We would strongly recommend that children are accompanied to and from school to ensure they adhere to regulations. We recommend only one adult accompanies a child or sibling groups.
- If you need to use public transport, please refer to government guidance on using this.

### Lunches

It is the intention for all schools to provide a meal for any child attending. However, the following things need to be highlighted:

- The kitchen will require a deep clean after closure;
- The kitchen staff will need time to order and receive delivery of food;
- We will need to ascertain the number of staff available, this will dictate how many meals they can provide.

With all of the above in mind, we would ask that in the first instance, you aim to send your child with a packed lunch in order to support us on this matter, however we can guarantee that income based Free School Meals will be provided, thank you.

As always, we will keep you informed with any further developments in line with government guidance and once we know the numbers that we will be required to work with give you more specific details about our arrangements. We will continue to provide activities for learning at home on our websites, keep in contact with you our families and support you all as best we can in these uncertain times.

We would like to reiterate that the government are strongly encouraging children in the mentioned year groups to attend **from** 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020. As a trust we would also add the proviso that this is an individual families choice and should not feel pressured either way on making a decision. If a family decide to keep their children at home, your school will be respectful of that choice.

Therefore, if you are the parent of a child in **Reception, Year 1 or Year 6**, please [CLICK HERE](#) to indicate your intentions. We would ask ALL parents to complete this no later than **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May at 12pm**, thank you. You will need to submit one form per eligible child. If you are also a key worker we would ask that you complete the separate Key Worker sign up form, this will be sent to you via your school at a later date.

Finally, please exercise extreme caution about what you say to your children, do not make any promises about the return to school and how this will look until we are clear as schools and have a finalised plan in place. You may still contact the schools in the usual way if you have any queries. In the meantime, I

would again please ask that you are patient with us on this matter until we have all the guidance and plans in place to share with you. Everything we know at the moment is in this letter, if you are looking for further information, please bear with us – we don't yet know ourselves!

Yours sincerely  
Chris Huscroft  
CEO

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Chris Huscroft". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.