



The Endeavour set of principles for the wider opening of schools.

Current Position

On 23 March, the Government enforced a lockdown across the country which affected the normal operation of schools. The government recognised that to support the response to the crisis, children of critical workers would still need to attend school and therefore in line with the scientific advice, nurseries, schools and colleges have remained open to a priority group of children and young people of such workers.

In addition, the Government have identified that there are a number of pupils recognised as vulnerable and provision at school would be made available to them. As a result, the four schools within the Endeavour Multi Academy Trust have been able to offer provision for those identified pupils. It must be noted that many of the pupils at the four schools require high levels of personal care and many may struggle to understand the notion of social distancing and this has presented challenges to school staff.

On 11th May 2020 Government guidance was released on opening schools and educational settings to more pupils from 01 June 2020. Guidance stated that the Government reviewed existing arrangements in line with scientific advice and that the UK was now past the peak of the virus. The Prime Minister has set out a recovery strategy which states that 'it is time to begin the phased return of children and young people to nurseries, schools and colleges in a way that is measured, reduces risks and is guided by science'.

Moving Forward

The initial request by Government for schools to re-open in phases is not enshrined in legislation or statutory guidance and subsequent guidance has recognised that the age phases identified for mainstream schools would not be appropriate for special school settings.

The Government were also very clear that there are no sanctions for schools who do not re-open or for parents who choose not to send their children to school. The Government maintains that the request to open on a wider basis is based on scientific evidence and Government policy.

As the responsible body / employer, responsibility lies with Endeavour Trust to consider the approach to be taken across the four schools before embarking



on a process of wider opening and the decisions made in this respect will be based on sound risk assessment.

In coming to a decision around the wider opening of our schools we have:

- considered all emerging Government guidance
- worked collaboratively with the LEA and other Staffordshire Special Schools to produce guiding principles for wider reopening (see below)
- surveyed our parents to determine the demand for places
- acknowledged the concerns expressed by trade unions regarding wider opening of schools
- held trust senior leadership discussions with all academy Headteachers

The intention is for the process of wider re-opening of our schools from June 15th which will give schools the opportunity to make arrangements in the best interests of our pupils, staff and parent/carers.

Endeavour Trust has been working collaboratively with the local authority, other local trust representatives and special school Headteachers to produce a set of guiding principles and these are described below.

Special Schools in Staffordshire - reset and recovery (29.05.20)

Overarching Principles

The approach is based on the following principles:

- The highest priority and consideration is the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and staff and other key stakeholders;
- This is a collaborative approach with schools & trusts, Staffordshire County Council and Professional Associations/Trade Unions
- The approach recognises different layers of accountability and responsibility including Government, countywide, trusts and individual schools
- Supporting each other
- Flexibility and local decision making

Specific Principles and practice

- Consistent and collaborative approach across Staffordshire Special Schools
- Plan towards all children and young people returning to school on a reasonable and appropriate timeline

- To be flexible, by matching appropriate numbers of children and young people to numbers of staff, the site and the environment -through risk assessments
- The school holds the responsibility for the risk assessments
- Working in close liaison and consultation with parents/carers/social workers/virtual school and health professionals, providing clear expectations to promote confidence in school decisions and practices, through a collaborative approach
- Continue to assess children with a social worker to establish appropriate attendance
- To liaise closely with Staffordshire School Transport
- Continue to provide home learning, free school meals and safe and well checks to pupils that need such support
- To follow Government advice in relation to safety and procedures
- To follow social distancing guidance and transmission control measures, as far as is reasonably possible, across the school environment
- Individual schools will decide the safe numbers of pupils per bubble, managing the attendance of pupils and as a result minimising the number of pupils that each staff member has contact with.
- Most pupils will attend for whole days with staggered starts and ends to the day where appropriate
- Exercise the best duty of care and wellbeing to staff
- To provide adequate protection for staff and pupils through use of PPE where it has been deemed that social distancing is not possible.

Schools will produce their own risk assessments which reflect the context in which they work including age range of pupils, building layout, classroom size etc.

The trust will consider these principles and the changes that may be required for the start of the academic year in September 2020.



Paul Elliott

CEO - Endeavour Multi Academy Trust