

# Vantage Academy Trust, Covid-19 and the return to full opening of schools



## Plans to more open our schools in September and keep your children safe

The safe return to school and to education is a key priority for us all.

We are now ready, following Government guidelines, to fully reopen schools to all pupils in a measured and sensible way. In the comments we have had from parents the key issue continues to be is “What are you doing to keep my children safe?” In the rest of this document, I will set out the general principles of the actions we are taking to provide you with the information and confidence to send your children back to school.

The first thing to say is that no school can eliminate risk entirely. And whilst it is fair to say that the first peak appears to be over, the situation in Leicester and recent rises in both Bolton and Knowsley show that the possibility of a second peak is still real. WE will always follow local public health guidance and if necessary close schools again on a local level if required, should the situation worsen.

When we reopen:

- Pupils within their class or their bubble will **NO LONGER** be expected to social distance from each other. They will however be expected to social distance from adults, and pupils in other bubbles. The adults in school must also socially distance. Each class will be in a specific bubble within school. This in our school will mean that:
  - Reception Class will be bubble 1
  - Year 1 and Year 2 Class will be bubble 2
  - Year 3 and Year 4 Class will be bubble 3
  - Year 5 and Year 6 Class will be bubble 4
- Pupils who are extremely clinically vulnerable (i.e. have received a letter from the NHS to shield), should now return to school unless instructed not to do so, by a doctor.
- Pupils who are classed as clinically vulnerable (i.e. have an underlying disease but didn't get an NHS letter) should seek medical advice, now need to return to school.
- We will continue with our amended behaviour policy, so that any child who wilfully refuses to social distance from adults and follow safety rules will be excluded. Poor behaviour will not be allowed to put other in danger.
- Children can now bring in the following items from home, their lunchboxes and PE KITS.
- Children will be required to wear uniforms, and will be encouraged to wear freshly washed clothes each day.

- Parents who are in receipt of vouchers for free school meals will lose their entitlement to vouchers from 1<sup>st</sup> September as free school meals will be served in school.
- The type and range of education offered will be different to normal. Classrooms will be set out in a formal arrangement from Y1 upwards. More individual and pair work, probably more formal work, but playtimes will feel a little more like normal, but pupils can only play within their own bubble.
- If any child in the 'bubble' has Covid 19 symptoms, that child will be sent home immediately and asked to undertake a Covid test. If a symptomatic child tests negative, we will then invite the child back in to school.
- If any child in the 'bubble' tests positive for Covid 19, we will inform all parents in the bubble and request 14 days' isolation by all.

These points are intended to reassure, and inform you. The government have made attendance compulsory from 1/9/20 and parents may face fines if they keep children off without a medical reason.

### The Timetable

The Board of Directors of the Trust will also be discussing September opening this week. They will check that all the risk assessments have been completed and that all possible safety precautions have been put in place to minimise the risk to all pupils and staff. We also, during this time, need to set up a medical space, ensure sufficient supplies of protective equipment, soap, towels, cleaning materials, tissues, lidded bins, hand gel etc. are in school in sufficient quantities to allow us to open.

On the Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020, following the Summer holiday Reception – Year 6 pupils will be returning to school .

### What we need you to do

Please carefully read a detailed letter from your child's school. This will give precise details of:

- The start and finish times of the school and which class will be starting at what time.
- Where to drop your child off and at what time (this will be staggered).
- Where and when to pick your child up – in the case of pupils in Y4-Y6, please tell school if they can go home alone.
- The school day will remain as normal but may be moved in start and finish times up to 15 minutes.
- Please talk to your child about what we will expect in school (social distancing) and that they may see some staff in face masks and gloves at certain times of the day, for example when performing first aid.
- Pupils will not be given or allowed to bring face masks into school.
- Please check the school website for letters and updates, and please read carefully any messages the school send out.
- Remember to socially isolate when dropping off and picking up children.

Our staff are looking forward to getting back to school, we will take the best care we can of your children, we will of course treat them as we would want our own to be. It will be strange, but these are further steps on the road to recovery, without risking the hard won gains from COVID-19.

Simon T Bramwell OBE

CEO Vantage Academy Trust

