

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

## COVID-19 coronavirus

Dear all,

I sincerely hope that you are all safe and well.

I know that these are difficult times, however the number one priority is to support the NHS in slowing down the spread of the COVID-19 virus, and that is why we are following the government guidance, which clearly states it is safer to stay at home.

The government narrative has changed. Initially all special schools were to remain open, however they are now asking us to offer a provision only for those who cannot remain at home, either because:

- Parents / carers are key workers - there is no one to look after them because **all** adults are key workers

Each school in our Trust has carried out a detailed assessment of risk, based on government guidance, and then looked at the provision it can offer based on the staff available. This includes for students that fall into the 'vulnerable' group, however we are asked to consider what would be in place during a 'normal' holiday, if no school provision usually needed then safe to be at home.

Any offer in place is likely to change in each school as the weeks progress as staff either go into, or return from, isolation. Therefore, schools may shut / partially re-open / shut again.

For families who are entitled to free school meals, we are in the process of setting up a system whereby you will receive support – this may be in vouchers, and you will be reimbursed for the time that schools have been closed.

I know that this may leave us feeling very vulnerable, especially as we cannot give you any assurances of routine, however we must follow government guidance and do what is right for the health of our staff and students.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully

Kevin Latham