

17 March 2020

I had hoped to introduce myself as Chair of Trustees in better circumstances, however, events have progressed rapidly over the last 48 hours. Our Academy Trust takes its statutory responsibilities to health & safety, safeguarding and wellbeing extremely seriously and, on their behalf, I would like to notify you of our strategy with regards coronavirus and the impact on our schools.

To the best of my knowledge I can report that we have had no confirmed cases of the virus in trust schools. Staff have been punctilious in ensuring that government guidelines have been adhered to including the regular and thorough washing of hands.

Proposals today to suspend classes and, in some instances full schools, is not a decision that we have come to lightly. A number of staff are required to self isolate and consequently some of our schools are unable to run safely at capacity.

Mindful of the impact this will have on our youngsters and their families, we are keen to act in a timely fashion. I met with the Trust's SLT team today and, further to discussions with Chairs of Governors at each school, can confirm our strategy for the coming weeks:

- Where possible, we will endeavour to maintain core provision in Trust schools. Should Headteachers and Chairs of LGBs perceive that ratios of staff to students is unsafe or a significant risk to health and wellbeing is posed, they reserve the right to amend their provision accordingly.
- At the current time, Airy Hill Community Primary School will remain fully open.
- West Cliff Primary School will continue to operate KS2 provision; Nursery, Reception, Y1 and Y2 are suspended until further notice.
- Castleton, Glaisdale and Lealholm schools are suspended until further notice.
- Each school will provide a range of learning resources for your child and has in place strategies to keep dialogues open between home and school.

I have worked in the education sector for over two decades and have never experienced a situation which I know has put school staff under such great pressure and caused such concern and worry to families and communities.

I am confident that the coming weeks will see clarification of the situation and direction from central government and we will of course relay this to you as it arises. Until such times our Headteachers will keep you up to date with developments at their respective schools and I am sure you will join me in thanking them and their staff for the tremendous job done in what has been a very challenging few weeks.

The Board of Trustees hope that you and your families remain well and I look forward to meeting with you in due course.

*Mathew Brown*

Mathew S Brown  
Chair of Trustees

