



Executive Weekly Update: 06 July 2020

A Message from the CEO

September 2020 calling.....

In this the final Weekly Update of the academic year (next week's instalment will be a #TransformingLives edition – again, the final one of this academic year), it is timely to reflect on last week's publication of DfE guidance around September.

Obviously, the detailed planning at local academy level had already begun; now, with, at last, some specific DfE guidance, we can complete much (but not all) of that granular work before the end of this term. The REDs have written at some length in this regard later in this update.

In preparation for September, I have now issued two key statements which detail our approach to full academy opening:

1. **A CEO letter to all parents across the trust is being sent out today** (Monday 6 July 2020 – also attached to this update). This letter confirms our continued commitment to the #safesteadygradual approach in all that we have done in relation to the crisis. It also makes clear our non-negotiable expectations around pupil attendance, pupil behaviour, curriculum organisation, campus hygiene and safety, pupil equipment management, catering, and pupil uniform. It will be followed, of course, by a letter from each Principal which re-confirms this statement and provides more local detail.
2. **A CEO statement for trustees which confirms our approach in more detail.** This is reproduced below.

Generally

1. We will not allow any catastrophising around 'lost learning'. Further to the CEO's recent input into PDG and Weekly Update, the very most any child will have lost in terms of total school days career (Year 1 – Year 11) is 3.5%. This is NOT a catastrophe and to describe it as such is inaccurate and unprofessional.
2. Sense of perspective and calm.
3. #safesteadygradual message will continue to dominate our discourse and planning.
4. Centralised strength in planning – locally applied solutions in academies.

Education

1. *Attendance.* This is priority one. Aside from the fact that normal attendance expectations (including legal) will apply w.e.f. 1 September 2020, we need to have CYP in academies to teach them. So... BIG focus on vulnerable/engagement with parents/re-affirming normal expectations.

2. *Behaviour*. This is priority two. In short, CYP need to behave impeccably so that teaching and learning can take place. Similarly, colleagues need to conduct themselves impeccably so that teaching and learning can take place safely and at pace.
3. *Curriculum*. This is priority three. Content, pedagogy and assessment will be the usual key threads in planning. Stripped back Schemes of Work etc to ensure any missing knowledge (using excellent formative assessment to diagnose) is remedied. Blended Learning is here to stay (the impact of which will be inspected by Ofsted during the Autumn term of 2020 in some parts of the country).
4. *Time*. This is priority four. Ensuring time is planned for (e.g. tutoring sessions/additional homework/additional lessons) specific input for any significant knowledge gaps.

Operations

1. Staff PD around Blended Learning etc.
2. Ongoing ICT improvements (hardware/MS tenancy/connectivity etc).
3. Full use of Public Health England advice in all (now being locally amended) risk assessments.
4. PPE remains available for all colleagues as desired.
5. Full engagement (when needed) with NHS Test and Trace process.
6. Ongoing enhanced (and more expensive) cleaning.
7. Discourage use of public transport (and encourage national requirements when doing so). Support local school transport arrangements (with LA s).
8. Work closely with LA s (as we have been to date). Particularly so as we produce local outbreak/local lockdown contingency plans.
9. Workforce scrutiny to check any remaining 'vulnerable' colleagues (clinically extremely vulnerable list paused w.e.f. 1 August 2020).
10. Made clear (already) annual leave/foreign travel employer expectations.
11. DSLs and SENCOs (and their staff teams) to be ensured more time to manage predicted local workload increase.

Financial

1. Submit Covid-19 exceptional costs claim by 21 July 2020.
2. Continue to monitor all additional expenditure w.e.f. 1 August 2020 and then w.e.f. 1 September 2020 (maybe another exceptional costs bidding round

I am hopeful that all of the above speaks for itself.

Annual People Survey – closing date 10 July 2020

Do please check that you have all contributed to this vital survey. Only in running this annual survey, and in maximising response rates across our almost 2,000 colleagues, can we continue the very strong start we have made to our review of our people development strategy. Please make sure YOUR voice is heard in this way!

THANK YOU, colleagues, trustees and governors for another amazing ATT year of #transforminglives. This one will go down as a heady mix of huge successes for us – along with the 'annus horribilis' dimension that is Covid-19. Please take the Summer break (even if strictly home based!) to get some genuine downtime to recharge and re-energise – we have all earned this more than ever!

Take care and stay safe.

Debbie



@AcademyTrustCEO #TransformingLives #proudCEO

Chief Finance Officer update

As the final Exec update of the year coincides with the end of my second year in the role I thought it would be a good opportunity to reflect on the past two years.

Financial performance

When I joined the Trust in Jul 2018 we were just in the process of recording an in-year deficit for c£1.5m, taking our cumulative reserves deficit to just over £4m. What lay ahead, having agreed a recovery plan with the ESFA, was a long road to recovery, with expectations that we were not going to get out of the deficit until Aug-23. However, due to a combination of strong cost control, through better budget management and continued group procurement; and perseverance with the ESFA to obtain additional growth funding; we are forecasting a position (subject to the unknown consequences of COVID-19) to be out of our cumulative reserves deficit by August-21, a whole 2 years quicker than expected. That is a massive achievement which we should all be proud of.

However; whilst we should remain optimistic of our future financial performance, COVID-19 has created a level of financial uncertainty which we all need to be aware of. With the Government having already spent billions to keep the country going; we have to be mindful that somehow the Government will have to recover such costs. With Year 7 catch-up funding having ceased; and at the time of writing this uncertainty over the future of the Primary Sport Premium and no detail of the announced COVID-19 catch-up funding; we may find ourselves in the future having to again be creative with the funding that we receive in order to meet our immediate needs.

Financial systems

Whereas year 1 of my tenure was about redesigning the budget model and accompanying finance team structure; year 2 has all been dominated by changes to our financial systems. The upgrade of PSF (our accounting system being 4 versions out of date) has taken almost 12 months to implement, with a number of teething problems encountered along the way by the finance team. We have overcome these and now have a system which we can truly rely upon.

A consequence of our change to the budget model in 2018/19 (introducing GAG pooling and splitting education and operations finance) was the unexpected inability of our budgeting software to deal with the new model. This led us to rapidly make a hard decision to change software provider in March this year to IMP in order to get the 2020/21 budget produce. This massive and time-critical project, on top of COVID-19 just beginning, was fully implemented within 6 weeks, astounding both IMP and myself. What we have now is a future proofed budgeting and forecasting system developed specifically for MATs.

Future – year 3

Alongside monitoring the financial fallout of COVID-19, a key focus for year 3 is going to be on embedding our processes, controls and reporting. In February this year, a revised set of financial regulations and scheme of delegation were issued. Whilst in most cases these are being followed, we need to focus our attention on putting in place the processes and controls to ensure that these are always followed; and where controls are breached appropriate action is taken.

Financial reporting has improved this year, especially at the academy level during the EFAMs, with both ICFP and agency spend data being provided to aid conversations. At the Trust level there is still work to do in order to provide the consistency and quality of information required to be reviewed by the Trustees. Whilst this is frustrating we knew that such reporting would come after the installation of PSF and IMP.

In conclusion; a significant amount of change has occurred in finance over the last 2 years; and whilst I'm immensely proud of the financial performance recoded by all of us to date; none of this could have been achieved without the strong support and dedication of the whole finance community and the willingness to embrace change. A big thank you from me and I promise no financial system changes next year.....!!!

Peter Wilson



@ATT_CFO

Head of Corporate Affairs update

Covid-19 has certainly changed every aspect of how we work, and our governance is no exception! I have been singularly impressed with the way in which everyone involved in our governance – trustees, local governors, clerks and our executive leaders – have adapted to the remote and on-line world we have moved to inhabit since March.

I would go so far as to say that being forced to operate remotely has actually increased our levels of communication – showing us, for example, that we do not have to travel long distances to be together and to share information. I have reflected on this in recent weekly updates, but – rest assured – we will be continuing to operate remotely from September where it makes sense to do so.

Our first LAC Chairs briefing of the new academic year will be on Wednesday 9 September at 4pm, and I will make sure this is a regular occurrence!

Our trustees have found themselves facing decisions in an unprecedented situation since March. They have – as usual – stepped up to the plate without hesitation, and it has been a pleasure to work with such a group of dedicated volunteers.

We must always remember that the trustees – who bear ultimate accountability for everything we do – also do this completely voluntarily, and we are lucky to have individuals from such varied professional backgrounds supporting us in our work.

I wanted to highlight three trustee appointments that have taken place during the lockdown period and introduce our latest recruits to you. I know they will look forward to getting to know you all in the coming months.

Richard Elms

Richard is a Physics graduate and has a master's degree in Educational Management. After serving as the Headteacher of several secondary schools, Richard joined the Department for Education, in 2005, as an Education Adviser in the Academies Division. In 2010 he joined a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), as Senior Adviser; during this time, he was responsible for the setting up of 5 large, secondary 'free' schools. In 2016, Richard became the Chief Executive of a MAT, a position he retired from at the end of 2019.



Michaela Jackson

Michaela has nearly 20 years experience in the financial sector as a senior executive working primarily with BlackRock. Her career has focused on working with some of the largest banking, insurance and pensions businesses in the UK and across Europe. Michaela operates as a Manager Coach experienced in building diverse and inclusive teams with a strong interest in how education can evolve to better support young people for the nature of jobs in the future.

She is a Danish/British national and spent four years living and working in Copenhagen, Denmark where she was able to experience the Nordic approach to education through her three children. Michaela is embarking upon a Diploma in Executive Coaching with the Academy of Executive Coaching during the summer of 2020. Michaela has an MA Hons from Oxford University in Politics, Philosophy and Economics.



Richard Priestley

Richard has worked in a number of senior financial positions within both PLC and private equity backed businesses. His current role is as CFO of a PE backed Environmental and Total waste management business. He has extensive experience of planning and driving business change to improve operations and financial performance across a wide range of sectors including, logistics, aviation and agriculture. Richard has a degree in Accounting and Finance and has been a qualified accountant (CIMA) since 1997.



Andy Gannon



@ATT_HOCA

Director of Safeguarding update

What is Honour based abuse?

The September 2020 version of Keeping Children Safe in Education has changed the language of Honour Based Violence (HBV) to Honour Based Abuse (HBA) to encapsulate the types of abuse that are not physical violence.

Honour based abuse is a collection of practices used to control behaviour within families in order to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or **honour**.

Violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their **honour** code.

Honour based violence and abuse, which **may** include emotional, psychological, sexual and physical abuse, is a reaction to what is perceived as **immoral behaviour** that brings shame/izzat/namous/sharaf on the **family** or community.

These '**immoral behaviours**' can include: running away, coming home late and spending time with people that the family do not approve of.

Women are predominantly (but not exclusively) the victims, which can be distinguished from other forms of violence, as it is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family and/or community members. Males can also be victims, sometimes as a consequence of their involvement in what is deemed to be an inappropriate relationship, if they are gay, or if they are believed to be supporting the victim.

Honour based abuse cuts across all cultures, nationalities, faith groups and communities, usually where a culture is heavily male dominated. Relatives, including females, may conspire, aid, abet or participate in honour based abuse, for what might seem a trivial transgression.

What possible offences are being committed?

Honour based abuse is a serious offence which can involve a number of crimes:

- Common assault
- Domestic abuse
- Forced marriage
- Cruelty to persons under 16 (including neglect and abandonment)
- Failure to secure regular attendance at school of a registered pupil
- Theft (e.g. passport)
- Child abduction
- Abduction of an unmarried girl under the age of 16 from parent or guardian
- Abduction of a woman by force or for the sake of her property
- Forced repatriation
- Rape
- Aiding and abetting a criminal offence
- Kidnapping
- False imprisonment
- Murder

Sarah Bloomer



@ATT_Safeguard

Education Update

Secondary

Planning for September 2020

We are conscious of the need for everyone to have time to plan for September and to discuss their plans with us over the next two weeks.

Here's a quick update of the main points following our discussion in ELT last Friday:

- Ed Thomas and the Regional Estates teams will support with the production of revised local Health and Safety risk assessments; work with Vertas (our cleaning contractor) to increase the numbers of daytime cleaners on our sites from September; and look to purchasing additional supplies of sanitiser, PPE and wipes!
- Kirsty Woolls and the Regional HR teams will support Principals in handling staff concerns, with a view to all staff returning to academies in September.
- Flowcharts are being created to guide academy staff about what to do if/when suspected Covid-19 cases arise and if local lockdowns are initiated.
- The consensus view is to plan for bringing the year groups back with staggered start dates for year groups - but all back within the first week of term so that teachers can induct one (or at the most two, year groups) into academy buildings at a time.
- Principals need to modify timetables to allow year group bubbles as appropriate in each setting. Be creative about how to minimise contact. For example some leaders are considering lengthening lessons to reduce changeover and to focus intensive recovery programmes of learning in each subject; adapting the number of subjects being studied initially in KS3 (building up as per the guidance to full coverage by the summer term of 2021); classroom bubbles within year groups where the children remain in 'tutor groups', changing temporarily from vertical tutor groups to horizontal—but whatever you do it must suit your setting. Discuss all plans with your RED as usual please.
- We suggest that where students have to move between specialist classrooms, cleansing routines of wiping down the equipment is built into lessons e.g. for IT and Music - children clean all equipment used at the end of the lesson with wipes.
- We expect that professional associations and networks will begin to issue further subject specific support about teaching specialist subjects but we would also bring your attention to what the guidance says about music and PE – see below.
- Principals will need to update the Home Academy Agreement addendum for September. The original HAA is not changing; only the addendum (to be completed by August GCSE exam results release week).
- We must ensure all academy Reception areas are using the visitor declaration issued at the start of the pandemic.
- Principals can now plan the PD day(s) in September to brief staff in advance of the return of the students.

Some key parts of the Guidance which signpost to support which is relevant now:

The return to school allows social interaction with peers, carers and teachers, which benefits wellbeing. The Department for Education, Public Health England and NHS England are hosting a **free webinar for school and college staff on 9 July** to set out how to support returning pupils and

students, and a recording will be available to access online afterwards - see [DfE - Supporting pupil and student mental wellbeing](#) for further details. This includes hearing from experts on the impacts of the pandemic on pupils' mental wellbeing and recovery techniques, and from education leaders about the actions they have been taking.

The Whole School **SEND** consortium will be delivering some training and how-tos for mainstream school teachers (including free insets and webinars) on supporting pupils with SEND to return to their mainstream school after the long absence, and on transition to other settings. Details of future training sessions are held on the [events page](#) of the SEND Gateway. You can opt to join Whole School SEND's [community of practice](#) when you sign up for an event to receive notifications about future training and resources as they are published.

The DfE has also published the first of the **relationship, sex and health education training modules** for teachers to support them in preparation to deliver content on mental health and wellbeing. The training module on [teaching about mental wellbeing](#), which has been developed with clinical experts and schools, will improve teacher confidence in talking and teaching about mental health and wellbeing in the classroom. It was published early given the importance of supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing at this time.

Schools should also provide more focused pastoral support where issues are identified that individual pupils may need help with, drawing on external support where necessary and possible. Schools should also consider support needs of particular groups they are already aware need additional help (for example, children in need), and any groups they identify as newly vulnerable on their return to school. To support this, teachers may wish to access the **free MindEdlearning** platform for professionals, which includes a [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) staff resilience hub](#) with materials on peer support, stress, fear and trauma and bereavement.

Guidance for Teaching Music and Physical Education

Music

Schools should note that there may be an additional risk of infection in environments where you or others are singing, chanting, playing wind or brass instruments or shouting. This applies even if individuals are at a distance. Schools should consider how to reduce the risk, particularly when pupils are playing instruments or singing in small groups such as in music lessons by, for example, physical distancing and playing outside wherever possible, limiting group sizes to no more than 15, positioning pupils back-to-back or side-to-side, avoiding sharing of instruments, and ensuring good ventilation. Singing, wind and brass playing should not take place in larger groups such as school choirs and ensembles, or school assemblies. Further detailed DfE subject guidance will be published shortly.

Physical activity in schools

Schools have the flexibility to decide how physical education, sport and physical activity will be provided whilst following the measures in their system of controls. Pupils should be kept in consistent groups, sports equipment thoroughly cleaned between each use by different individual groups, and contact sports avoided.

Outdoor sports should be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not, maximising distancing between pupils and paying scrupulous attention to cleaning and hygiene. This is particularly important in a sports setting because of the way in which people breathe during exercise. External facilities can also be used in line with government guidance for the use of, and travel to and from, those facilities

Schools should refer to the following advice:

[guidance on the phased return of sport and recreation](#) and guidance from [Sport England](#) for grassroots sport advice from organisations such as the [Association for Physical Education](#) and the [Youth Sport Trust](#)

Schools are able to work with external coaches, clubs and organisations for curricular and extra-curricular activities where they are satisfied that this is safe to do so. Schools should consider carefully how such arrangements can operate within their wider protective measures.

Activities such as active miles, making break times and lessons active and encouraging active travel help enable pupils to be physically active while encouraging physical distancing.

Ofqual consultation summary – Examinations season, Summer 2021

Andy Gannon has produced this helpful summary of the Ofqual consultation around summer examinations 2021. The closing date is 16th July 2020 (we know – madly tight!) and so if you have any responses you would like us to put into our trust response please give your feedback to your RED.

Please read in conjunction with the full consultation [here](#).

The consultation proposes, subject by subject, changes which Ofqual say are designed either to *free up teaching time* or to *address obstacles that could be created by any public health restrictions*.

There are some more general questions first.

Optionality in papers

Ofqual does not believe there should be a wider choice of questions to answer in the exams than there usually would be.

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the 2021 exams should not include more optional questions than usual?
2. Do you have any comments on the use of optional exam questions in the 2021 exams?

Number and length of exams

Ofqual does not propose to alter the number or length of any exams.

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the number of exams taken for each subject in 2021 should be the same as usual?
4. Do you have any comments on the number of exams taken for each subject in 2021?
5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the exams taken in 2021 should not be longer than usual?
6. Do you have any comments on the length of exams in 2021?

Exam timetable

Ofqual is holding a pretty much open consultation around this aspect, saying they do not control individual exam timetables but would need to change regulations if exams stretched beyond the end of June.

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the GCSE timetable should start after half term in 2021 if results can still be released on 26 August 2021?
8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the GCSE timetable should start after half term in 2021 even if this necessitates a delay in the release of results?
9. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of delaying the start of GCSE exams in 2021?

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the A level and AS timetable should start after half term in 2021 if results can still be released on 19 August 2021?
11. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the A level and AS timetable should start after half term in 2021 even if this necessitates a delay in the release of results?
12. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of delaying the start of A level and AS exams in 2021?

Pages 16 to 43 of the document then set out proposals for each subject at both GCSE and AS/A level. There are also some questions specifically about the sampling of the syllabus content in relation to GCSE History and GCSE Geography specifically.

Andy proposes that we do not respond (as a trust) to questions about specific subjects unless we feel there is potential for significant injustice. Principals may wish to suggest our Heads of Faculty do so individually.

Have a great week!

Susan and Vince



@ATT_REDSE and @ATT_REDSW

Primary

Planning for September 2020

Please refer to Susan and Vince's helpful summary above for an update of the main points following our discussion in ELT last Friday.

The document (accessible via the link below) contains several primary and secondary exemplar timetables and planning details that may help to structure your conversations and thinking around this complex task.

Please do utilise your time with your EPs and REDs to work on the finer details together and ensure we all actively seek to draw upon the skill, creativity, and logistical brilliance of all stakeholders! Colleagues in all roles, Local Academy Committee members and our children and parents will all have excellent suggestions and solutions which will no doubt result in the production of excellent, bespoke plans to meet the needs of our children, curriculum and individual academy sites.

<https://unitedlearning.org.uk/portals/0/unitedthinking/Examples%20of%20protective%20measures.pdf?ver=2020-07-03-192023-697>

Statutory Assessment 2020-2021

The DfE have confirmed that primary tests will take place as normal in 2020-21. These include:

- Phonics screening check
- Key Stage 1 SATs
- Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check
- Key Stage 2 SATs

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) are reviewing requirements for the phonics screening check in year 2 following the cancellation of the 2020 assessment and are scheduled to provide an

update before the end of the summer term. More information is available in section 4 of the following guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#section-4-assessment-and-accountability>

Following last week's announcement that the statutory rollout of the reception baseline assessment has been postponed until **September 2021** we will share our group plans with regard to the early adopter option for **2020-21** over the coming weeks following consultation with our EYFS colleagues. In the meantime, we would encourage you to take a look at the **draft Early Adopter Framework and Handbook**, available via the links below:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/09gm18bn8367iab/EYFS_Early_Adopter_Framework.pdf?dl=0

https://www.dropbox.com/s/5b1b46vy31luzld/EYFSP_Handbook.pdf?dl=0

As expected, the government have also now confirmed changes to the **Early Learning Goals** which will take effect from **September 2021**. They will also proceed with the removal of the "exceeding" criteria and add a requirement to promote good oral health to the EYFS framework. The revised Early Learning Goals and further detailed information is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/896872/EYFS_reforms_consultation_-_government_response.pdf

Signposting Families to Summer Holiday 2020 Provision

Every academy Principal will be sending helpful guidance and resources to all parents prior to the end of the academic year to signpost them to useful community, charity and health care support within their locality. Once again, we would ask all stakeholders to contribute – the shared expertise, local knowledge and community networks will prove invaluable in equipping our families with the widest possible network of support. Our sincere thanks in advance.

As always, we thank you all for your positivity, dedication and commitment to our children, families, communities and each other.

Have a wonderful week #TransformingLives!

Steven and Amy



@ATT_REDPE and @ATT_REDPW