



The Active Learning Trust

ACTIVE LEARNERS · ACTIVE LEADERS · ACTIVE CITIZENS

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Sunday, 3 January 2021

Dear Parents,

Re-Opening of ALT Schools in Suffolk and Cambridgeshire- January 2021

As you will be aware the rate of COVID infection in both Suffolk and Cambridgeshire has increased over the Christmas break and it is likely there will be further increases as the impact of the relaxed restrictions on Christmas day start to impact on transmission and infection rates. The preventative measures that our schools have put in place since the start of the first wave of the pandemic and since the start of the new term in September have been hugely effective in managing Covid-19 cases and our headteachers and their staff have worked relentlessly to ensure that our schools, where possible, have remained open. I would like to thank you for your support in working closely with our family of schools to both reduce the spread of the virus and to ensure that your children are able to continue with their education with us.

As you may be aware there have been a significant national debate over the weekend on the re-opening of primary schools from the 4th January. A number of the teaching and support staff trade unions, along with those representing headteachers are recommending to their members that they don't attend school if they have any health and safety concerns under Section 44 of the Education Act. Unions have further advised that they should only support either remote education or face to face support to vulnerable and key worker children who attend schools. As a result, schools have been asked to establish the impact this might have on being able to deliver education safely in school due to a lack of staff. This may mean that some of our ALT schools do not have enough staff available to open safely. Our headteachers are currently working with colleagues to establish the exact situation and will be in a position to provide you with full details tomorrow. It is the decision of the ALT Board of Trustees as to whether they can open safely.

As a Trust and as the CEO, we are fully committed to ensuring that we, where safe to do so, keep our schools open for the benefit of our children and communities. However, we fully support any of our headteachers who makes a recommendation to the Board of Trustees not to open for the majority of pupils from 5th January 2021 where it is not safe to do so. Parents and carers should check their school

communications/website etc to see if their school is open/partially open or closed. This may change as the situation changes locally or nationally. If a school is closed, children of critical workers and vulnerable children will be invited to attend as soon as possible. In these circumstances, contact your school via the Trust questionnaire to confirm your place in school. It may take some of our schools a day or two, or more, to know whether they have enough staff to reopen to all children safely and this situation may change on a daily basis so please monitor communications closely. All children will be provided with some remote learning if the school is closed and they are at working from home.

The Government have stated that it is vital that children should attend school. School attendance became compulsory for all children again from the beginning of September. We do understand that many parents will feel anxious about their children attending school at this time. If this is the case, we would urge you to speak to your school's headteacher to discuss it. Our schools have already put in place a number of different measures and will be able to explain the ways they are adapting strategies to further reduce the risks. As stated, where our schools are open for your child, attendance is still compulsory. However, we understand the issues and anxieties parents may have and do not expect to apply sanctions for non-attendance in the current circumstances. This will be reviewed as the situation changes or where individual circumstances apply.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding. We recognise this is a fast moving and changeable situation and acknowledge the difficulties this may be causing you.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Chamberlain,
Chief Executive Officer
National Leader of Governance