



5th June 2020

Dear Colleague

RE: NST wider reopening of schools

Thank you for your email correspondence received on the 1st June. We would like to begin by thanking you for the very comprehensive overview of the actions taken by the NST and NST schools in managing the many varied and complex actions required to meet the demands presented by this situation. The hard work, commitment and collaboration displayed by all involved is really commendable.

In terms of moving forwards in terms of the decision making required to support the wider reopening of schools we would like to respond with the following comments:

Decision Making

As portfolio holder, Cllr Khan has been granted the delegated authority to make a decision on behalf of the Council. This decision is, however, to be made in consultation with the other Executive members of the Council. The decision will be to determine if the conditions are now felt to be met to advise LA maintained schools to commence with a phased and gradual return to wider opening in line with the original proposal agreed by Labour Group on the 26th May 2020.

Role of Labour Group

There is currently no proposal to discuss or ratify this specific decision at a meeting of the full group. Clearly all councillors will continue to consider all aspects of the response to the pandemic as it affects their communities and citizens, as we move through different phases of the recovery process. Many councillors also fulfil a valuable role in representing the range of community views through their role as members of school governing bodies. It is our belief that one of the key strengths of retaining and supporting the maintained school sector is the opportunity we all have to ensure schools and the whole school community retain their focus and accountability at the local level. We know that this is a guiding principle of the NST and its member schools and we wish to continue to develop and strengthen those shared values.

Timescales

A previously scheduled JCNC meeting involving trade unions and officers of the council was held on Thursday 4th June. The agenda for the meeting considered matters relating to the wider reopening of schools. Cllr Khan and Cllr Mellen attended this meeting to provide a

perspective from the Executive and to enable further direct dialogue. This is in line with the commitment made by the Council to continue to engage with the relevant trade unions over the conditions that will enable wider reopening to occur. This was a consultative meeting. A follow up meeting to further explore the options that were tabled will be held on Monday, 8th of June.

As noted above, decision making rests with Cllr Khan in consultation with the Executive members of the Council. In the current circumstances, the Executive meets twice weekly, on Monday's and Thursday's. Discussion of this issue will be scheduled at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

We note you request that sufficient time is given to schools once a decision has been reached in order to enable timely messages to be delivered to staff, children and parents/carers about proposals for wider reopening. We understand fully the importance of this request and will commit to working with you to manage the messages in a timely and reassuring manner.

We hope this response provides you with the reassurance that you are seeking. We recognise that a huge amount of work has been undertaken by school leaders and staff at all levels to keep schools operating for children of key workers, vulnerable pupils and pupils with an EHCP. We also recognise that the experience and learning you have gained over the last 3 months of lockdown is invaluable in terms of the planning required for a wider reopening of schools to additional pupils. We thank you for all of this work on behalf of the children, young people and families of Nottingham.



Councillor David Mellen
Leader of the Council
Nottingham City Council



Councillor Neghat Khan
Portfolio Holder for Early Years,
Employment and Education