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Dear Parent or Carer

I wrote to you on Monday to try to explain clearly what schools are likely to be asked to do after next week's half term break and how we are planning our next steps. We received some very kind feedback from parents about that letter and I am enormously grateful for that. These are extraordinarily difficult times and schools are being asked to make some of the most important decisions we will ever take. As I have said all along, some will agree with our decisions and some won't and that is absolutely fine. What I can absolutely assure you of is that we will continue to be honest and open with you and try to share as much information as we can about what we are doing and, crucially, why we are doing it.

I am writing to you today to provide our next update on what our schools will look like after next week's half term break. Our job is still to plan for how we can start to take more pupils back in a way that allows us to reduce risks as much as we can and to be honest with you about what we believe the level of risk to be. You should expect to be able to ask, "How safe is it?" and to be given a full and honest answer. We are doing everything we can to be able to answer that question as fully as possible.

Throughout the week we have been planning how to deliver on the government's hope **"to offer some face-to-face support for year 10 and year 12"**. It is very important to say that the government's decision on whether they expect this to happen from Monday 1 June, will not be announced until Thursday 28 May.

There is a great deal of important information we still do not have, most importantly the scientific evidence that the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has used in its consideration of the issue of schools. The government was committed to release this but has not yet done so. We are also trying to get better information about the local rate of infection (R number) as we know this is higher in Yorkshire than, say, London, but we do not know where things stand in East Riding or Hull.

It is with enormous concern that I have to tell you that as I write this, the Department for Education's guidance for secondary schools has not yet been published. This means that secondary schools have been given no information on numbers of students who should be invited in and when, no information on how many students might be taught together, nothing on social distancing expectation, or indeed any of the other basic information any secondary school would need to plan to bring in more students safely.

Over the last week we have been doing significant work on assessing risk in schools and putting measures in place to reduce risk. In our primary schools we have been able to write to parents today with detailed information on what we will be putting in place for pupils. While we have been working all week in our secondary schools, planning for a wide range of



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scenarios, I am very sorry to say that I cannot give parents or students in years 10 and 12 similar detailed plans. Schools have simply not been given the most basic information we need.

Although responsibility for decisions around school opening sits with the trust rather than the local authority, as you would expect we have been working extremely closely with the East Riding local authority throughout the crisis. Yesterday, after significant careful deliberation, East Riding of Yorkshire Council sent the following to all schools:

“Whilst the cautious increase in pupil numbers is an individual schools decision, East Riding of Yorkshire Council’s advice is that schools should consider deferring the implementation of any wider opening until at least the 8th June if the announcement made is for the phased return to commence from 1st June. We strongly advise schools to use this time to finalise their plans and preparations in light of any updated government guidance and Public Health advice.”

We have reviewed this position, along with all available information we have sought from Public Health England, the local authority and national organisations that support schools and we have considered what we do not yet know. As a result, it is very clear that we will not be in a position to begin to welcome back any more students before Monday 8 June. Please rest assured that school and trust leaders are willing to work throughout the next two weeks to respond as soon as government guidance is published and hope to have plans ready as soon as we know how we can manage risks and share in detail with parents, students and staff what is in place.

In the meantime, we will continue our provision for the children of critical workers, including through next week’s half term break. Our work on the online learning platform continues and we remain here to answer any questions or offer any support we can. Please do get in touch with the school if you have questions or queries.

We will do everything we can to be open and honest with you. We will give you all the information we have and try to explain our thinking as clearly as possible. I will write to you again as soon as we have some more of the information we need.

Wishing you and your families the very best.

Yours faithfully

Jonny Uttley
CEO

