



Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June

Dear Parents/Carers

This is a collective letter from the Headteachers of the ATHOS consortium of schools. Please take time to read this to better understand our decision making and how we will be operating over the coming weeks.

We ask you to consider what our schools are doing and are having to do differently because of each of our unique circumstances. This means arrangements for wider opening will be different for each school. Please be assured that we have made the decisions for each of our schools for the right reasons and to ensure the safety of our children and staff is a priority.

For many years, the schools in Atherton and Tyldesley, which includes Hindsford, Howe Bridge, Astley and Moseley Common, have worked together as a consortium, known as ATHOS. The heads meet regularly to provide support and challenge for each other to be the best they can be and to make decisions for the benefit the children and families in our communities. The schools work together on school improvement initiatives, to provide training and support for staff and provide joint activities for children to participate in.

Throughout the COVID 19 pandemic, the heads have remained in touch, supported each other and discussed and agreed ways forward to provide education and care for your children following the guidance set by the government.

Primary schools were advised by the local authority to delay wider opening for some pupils in Reception, Y1 and/or Y6 on the 8<sup>th</sup> June because of the COVID 19 infection rate in the area. However, it now looks like it safer to open to schools more widely from the 15<sup>th</sup> June.

In order to do this, each school has undertaken a comprehensive risk assessment and put protective measures in place. The headteachers have had to take into account the structure and size of the school building and which staff are available to come into school. Some staff are classed as vulnerable because of health problems and some staff are having to shield vulnerable relatives they live with. These staff should not be in school at this stage. Thus, some schools may be operating with less staff than is usual.

Because of this, you will see some differences in how each of our schools operates over the coming weeks. Not all year groups suggested by the government will be able to return on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Some may start to return on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. One school may admit Y6, but not Reception and Y1, whereas a school just up the road may admit Reception first. Some schools will aim to phase pupils back into school from the recommended year groups over the next few weeks. Some may not have room to bring back all the suggested year groups because of adherence to social distancing measures and the space available.

We ask that you recognise and understand why we may be operating differently at this stage but to be assured we are doing the best we can to increase the number of children who can safely return to school. We will continue to provide and direct home learning for those children who will not return.

With our very best wishes

The ATHOS headteachers.