

**Joint Statement to all staff from the Thinking Schools Academy Trust and Trade Unions**

**24<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

We recognise the last few weeks have been difficult as will the coming weeks continue to be for all, however our actions will have a profound effect on our colleagues, our pupils, and those closest to us.

During this time of crisis school leaders, teachers and support staff are doing essential work. Schools and all those who work in schools are a linchpin that society simply cannot operate without.

The crisis means that school leaders, teachers and support staff are working in new situations and new ways in order to meet the challenges we face every day.

We will all need to continue to be flexible as we adjust to these new arrangements, the work our staff have done so far in holding our schools together to this point has been inspirational.

***Our Commitment***

We are committed to keeping our staff safe and supporting them whilst at work; whether in school or at home.

Leaders and Trade Union representatives will work together with staff in their Schools to follow guidance, access resources and support that they have been provided with, and to identify problems as they arise to allow these to be addressed in a timely manner.

Staff wellbeing and communication is paramount and the Trust are working with Leaders to support, coach and mentor line managers to promote this. The Trust continue to develop communication channels, access to wellbeing resources and are working with Leaders to continue to monitor and review the impact of the current situation on workload.

The Trust will follow Government guidelines regarding all employment matters and continue to review and update our staff FAQs; staff will not be placed at detriment because of the current situation.

***Working together***

The Trust have a well established, positive relationship with the Trade Unions and continue to work collaboratively during these unprecedented times. In response to the current crisis, we held a JCNC in term 4 to discuss the Trust's response to the crisis and the mechanisms that have been put in place to support our staff and our pupils. We were pleased to hear that all Trade Unions were supportive of our approach and the steps we had taken to ensure the safety and security of our staff.

The Trust and the Trade Unions are asking all School leaders to work with their local Union representatives to support local members, ensuring that there is an open dialogue and mechanism for feedback.

Schools should continue to hold their local union meetings, these should be regular (fortnightly during this period) and held virtually over Teams. The meetings should allow an opportunity to talk through emerging issues, celebrate; good news, success and best practice, discuss how we can continue to work together and seek ways for all staff to contribute.

Outcomes should be fed back from local representatives to Heads and the Trust HR Partners to enable issues to be addressed and good news shared. All meeting minutes will be shared with the JCNC and where appropriate further discussions will take place at the JCNC meetings, termly JCNC meetings will be established during this time.

The Trust and Trade Unions will work with Leaders, local Union representatives and staff to ensure that all Trade Unions are represented across the Trust, members know who their nearest local representative is and that there are effective communication channels available.

In a rapidly changing situation we need to ensure that we all look after each other and show patience during what may be difficult and confusing time. We need to work together openly and collaboratively as we face the challenges and opportunities ahead.

In meeting these challenges we are committed to working together and building on our already strong relationship between the Trust and Trade Unions, over the coming months and would encourage all School leaders, local reps and staff to do likewise.

The Trust in collaboration with the Trade Unions will continue to develop our pragmatic and forward thinking approach to the current crisis.



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