



27 March 2020

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to inform you that after careful consideration, we have taken the decision to form a temporary regional E-ACT hub for the children of key workers and our most vulnerable pupils who attend an E-ACT academy in Walsall.

Starting from Monday 30 March 2020, our staff and the small number of pupils we currently have in attendance at our academies in Walsall will be relocated to West Walsall E-ACT academy. To support parents and carers, a daily minibuss service will be provided between academies.

We have taken the decision to move to a regional hub setup so we can provide our pupils with an even better quality of care in an equally safe, well-staffed academy environment in the local area. The move will also enable us to provide our families with the support they need over a longer, more sustainable period of time.

#### **Providing a sustainable provision**

As government measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus increasingly place greater restrictions on our daily lives, and as more and more people are asked to self-isolate, we are sensitive to the growing pressures on our staff and the impact this is having on their wellbeing.

By combining provision with a neighbouring E-ACT academy, we have a much larger pool of experienced and specialist teaching and professional services staff available to look after our children. Furthermore, we can commit to providing a more sustainable provision until we can re-open our academies as normal.

#### **What does this mean for our pupils in practice?**

Our pupils will be supported by staff they are already very familiar with as well as qualified staff from West Walsall E-ACT Academy. We have also carefully considered the pupils currently in attendance, especially those with specific needs, and we know that West Walsall E-ACT Academy's excellent facilities more than meet all our pupils' requirements.

Furthermore, we can provide academy parents and carers with reassurances around the safety and wellbeing of their children as all our academies follow the same stringent safeguarding and welfare processes.

Please note that we will be keeping our temporary relocation under continuous review.

#### **How many pupils will there be in one academy?**

The combined numbers of pupils at West Walsall E-ACT Academy will still be very low as most of our parents and carers are keeping their children at home. Just a small number or no pupils at Willenhall E-ACT Academy, Reedswood E-ACT Academy and West Walsall E-ACT Academy have taken up places. As has been made clear in the latest government guidance, smaller groups of pupils in schools and academies are considered to carry a lower risk.

By temporarily moving our provision into a larger E-ACT academy, we can look after our pupils in smaller groups in wider, more open spaces. Nevertheless, the academy premises will be regularly cleaned in line with the latest government guidelines, and pupils will be reminded of the importance of washing their hands throughout the day.

#### **For pupils entitled to free school meals**

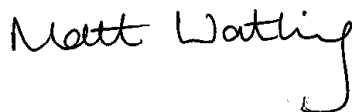
Pupils who are eligible for free school meals can continue to collect their hampers/grab bags from West Walsall E-ACT Academy.

#### **Arrangements for pupils at home**

Staff who are not currently based in academy continue to work remotely and are setting classwork online and through work packs. We plan to remain in regular contact with parents and carers to ensure the quality of educational provision for all our pupils is maintained, whether they are based at home or in academy.

#### **Thank you for your support**

These are clearly unprecedented times for us all, and we are having to make tough decisions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Watling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'g'.

Yours sincerely,

Matt Watling  
Regional Education Director - North