**National Society for Education in Art & Design**

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20th May 2020

Dear Headteacher

NSEAD members want to return to their art classrooms as soon as possible. Pupils need the art, craft and design equipment and materials and teaching that they can only get in a classroom environment. But this can only happen when we are fully confident that allowing our children to return to school is safe - for everybody.

Throughout this period of school closures, we have been providing advice to members delivering practical lessons for vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers. Practical work can, and should happen, but there are specific issues that will need to be considered in addition to all normal planning and risk assessment judgements. Of course, as numbers increase these judgements become far more complex.

Headteachers will use the expertise of their specialist leaders as they consider the layout of practical subject rooms not typical of normal classrooms. Guidance by CLEAPSS on the safe division of workshops and specialist studios, models how class sizes should be determined by careful analysis of each room and not based on a selected group size number.

We know that safety and welfare of pupils and staff is a paramount principle for headteachers everywhere. We welcome the Government announcement that they no longer wish to dictate June 1st as a fixed day for the return of primary school pupils, and that they will not force schools to open to pupils. We also recognise that this puts a new onus on employers to make these difficult decisions of when and how to determine when it is safe to operate, based on local circumstances. It is more important than ever that the concerns of staff are heard and taken into account, in every school. We do not expect risk to be eliminated, but it must be mitigated so that risks are at an acceptable level for school staff students, parents and carers.

We remain concerned that despite repeated requests, the modelling data on which the schools’ guidance is based has still not been published. There are growing concerns that track, trace and isolate measures are facing delays, and the additional resources and budget that you need for enhanced school cleaning, PPE and risk assessments are not available.

On behalf of our members, who are being asked to prepare for the partial reopening of schools, I implore you to listen to their concerns, their professional opinions and to take them fully into account as you make decisions about arrangements in your school.

NSEAD is fully committed to getting pupils back to their art rooms – but for the sake of our children, our members, and our communities, this can only happen when it is safe to do so.

Yours faithfully,

Michele Gregson, General Secretary NSEAD