



26 June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are safe and well?

### **COVID-19: update**

This week we have welcomed many year 6 pupils back to school, which completes our phased programme of widening access to both primary and secondary schools. There are now approximately 650 children benefiting from onsite or face to face provision in nursery, reception and years 1, 6, 10 and 12 as well as children of key workers and vulnerable pupils/students.

### **Widening access to school**

I would like to acknowledge the frustration that many families will be feeling who have children in other year groups. Regrettably recently confirmed government guidance regarding maximum 'bubble' size and social distancing, as well as staff availability all come into play to restrict what more can be done to facilitate face to face contact for greater numbers at this time. In this context all our schools are now operating pretty much at full capacity which means that sadly most will be unable to welcome any further pupils/students back this term. This will though, ultimately be a decision made by Headteachers locally as circumstances and capacity do vary greatly from school to school. On their behalf, therefore, I would request that on this (and other matters) parents do not make comparisons between schools. We will continue to ensure, wherever possible, that our home-learning offer remains secure to support all those children.

Recent press briefings have suggested that all year groups will fully return in September and we await government guidance about how this will be implemented. Please rest assured that our Trust and school leadership will engage positively and realistically to ensure the best decisions are made in the interests of all our young people. It is still unclear at this point whether we will be in a position to communicate our plans before the summer holiday period. Equally, we have no further guidance to share on the summer holiday, so must assume that all provision on our school sites will cease when holidays officially commence.

### **Free school meal vouchers**

The Department for Education has now announced that families of children eligible for free school meals will be provided with a voucher to cover the full seven week summer holiday. Eligible families will be receiving these summer vouchers through the National Voucher Scheme (Edenred). Parents who have questions can contact Edenred directly at [freeschoolmealsparentscarers@edenred.com](mailto:freeschoolmealsparentscarers@edenred.com).

## **'Catch-up'**

We are delighted that the government is investing substantially in 'catch up' throughout the 2020/21 academic year and that they have chosen to use the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) research as a basis for this. Many of our previous school and Trust strategies have been based on EEF research and we look forward to receiving further guidance ready to roll this out in the Autumn Term.

## **Examination results days**

Our secondary Headteachers are currently looking at ways that GCSE and A level examination results will be issued in August. This of course will require a balance between ensuring personal safety alongside our desire to provide an excellent service for our students. Again, we await guidance to assist in our decision making and will inform families about a plan when we are able.

To conclude , I would again like to take this opportunity to thank our school leaders and staff teams for their continued enthusiasm, energy and dedication during this difficult time. I hope that the last few weeks of term will allow for a little more stability and continuity for all in our school communities whether working on or offsite. Thanks also to you, our families, who have worked with us to support our young people throughout.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Sibley  
Chief Education Officer