



25 June 2020

Dear Families

We hope that all is still well with you. It is strange to think that we are approaching the end of the school year already. It may be an indication that things are slowly beginning to return to 'normal' if time feels like it is passing more quickly.

We are very grateful to our staff teams for managing the wider return to school for so many of our young people so effectively. All whilst keeping the children (and therefore you) and colleagues safe. We remain grateful to you as families for your ongoing support and patience given the uncertainty of the times in which we find ourselves.

Black Lives Matter

Thank you for the positive feedback to the letter from David Boyle about our schools' position on challenging racism in all its forms. Our school leaders have been discussing the issue with staff and some of the young people in school. As stated in the letter, we would like to offer you as families the chance to contribute to the discussion and an invitation to, and an agenda for, a virtual meeting will be issued shortly.

End of term

• Primary schools

We believe that it would be better for *all* children to have some time in school before the summer holiday. We suspect that you would agree with us. However, whilst social distancing requirements are in place it is clearly impossible to bring all children back at the same time. **We are proposing that we vary current arrangements for the last week of term (w/b 13 July)** to provide more children in Years 2-5 with the chance to have some contact with teachers and peers before September.

This would mean that each year group would be offered the chance to have at least one day in school during the week. Due to the necessity of keeping classes small and more limited staff availability, the children currently in school will need to learn at home that week. We realise that this may cause some challenges for working parents but hope that the benefits to all children are obvious. We trust that the timing of this letter provides you with sufficient notice to make alternative arrangements. Similarly, the arrangements for the children in the 'key worker' group would also need to be adapted; not all children currently in this group would be able to attend onsite provision that week therefore.

• Secondary school

We also aim to offer 'face to face' meetings for *some* students in Years 7-9 if it is safe to do so in the final week of term. Prioritised students would be invited in for a meeting with a teacher/tutor to review progress and to plan for the summer, ready for the return to school in September. The arrangements for the children in the 'key worker' group would continue as at present.

• All schools

The final day of term for children will now be Thursday 16 July. Please note that this is a change from the original calendar date. Friday 17 July will now be used for the Staff Professional Day which was postponed from 18 June for obvious reasons. This day will include a number of things including preparation for the autumn term. Your child's school will confirm arrangements for w/b 13 July (e.g. which children will be onsite and when) at some point next week.

Summer holidays, free school meals and the return in September

You may have heard about the government's decision to support the call to provide free school meals for eligible families over the summer holiday period. Somewhat belatedly, they agreed with what many school leaders and, of course, Marcus Rashford had been saying for a while. There are no more details as yet. We understand that it will be a voucher to cover the six weeks of summer. We will update eligible families once details are announced.

We hope that our young people will continue with the good habits of self-study they have developed during 'lockdown' over the summer holiday. Whilst everyone needs (and deserves) a proper break, keeping the 'basics' going (regular reading, mental arithmetic) as well as taking on creative and physical challenges will make the return to school in September much easier.

We hope too that we will be able to return to 'normal' school in September. It is possible that we may have to have a version of part-time schooling if social distancing measures are again required as they are at present. This could be on a two days on/two days off basis or a two week cycle with one week in school and the next at home. Clearly, until there is health advice later in the summer, no one can know exactly what things will look like in September.

The return to school is unlikely to be a case of 'business as usual'. It may take longer to get all children back in school even if it is judged to be safe to do so. We will do our best to keep you up to date with our plans as information is made available.

Yours sincerely



Helen George
Chair of the Trust



David Boyle
CEO