

2 April 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that you are all managing to stay well. Thank you for your ongoing support during this time and for all that you are doing to ensure that your children are supported during the school closure. I appreciate that many of you are balancing your own work commitments, supporting your children with their learning and supporting extended families, as well as managing your own wellbeing.

The purpose of this letter is primarily to provide an update on school provision over the Easter holidays, as well as a general update.

Easter

As we approach the planned Easter holidays, the Government guidance makes it clear that where possible, schools should continue to look after critical workers' children and vulnerable children throughout the Easter holidays. The Trust will continue to maintain provision at Carleton High School and De Lacy Primary School over the Easter holidays. We have also made the decision that both of these schools will open on the bank holidays during this period. Schools have been contacting parents and carers who are critical workers this week, to ask about whether places are wanted for the bank holidays. We thank you for the responses that we have received, as this clearly assists with our staffing plans. As the pressure on the NHS increases, we understand that circumstances at home might change. If you are a critical worker who has not needed to send your child into school, but find that your circumstances change over the coming weeks, please contact the School directly and they will ensure provision is made.

Home Learning

Thank you for the positive comments that leaders have received about the provision of home learning materials and the amount of work that is being completed at home. We understand that as parents and carers, you are raising children and doing your best at a time when they are trying to make sense of what is going on around us. If that means that some days you are unable to complete the work set or you do not do as much as planned, please know that we do understand this; it is only important that we are all doing our best at a difficult time.

We are keen to get the balance right with home learning and there is no road map in these unique circumstances. We also know that parents and carers are not expected to be teachers! As families, we are all managing a very difficult time. As you know, we have produced resources for pupils and online materials right across the Trust. However, we are realistic and have not expected pupils to be doing school work all day long. We are keen to gain feedback on home learning and have produced a short online survey for parents and carers. We would appreciate any feedback and we will look to build this into planning after Easter, wherever possible. The link to the survey will be made available in a forthcoming letter from Heads of School.

During the Easter holidays, it is important that we give pupils, parents, carers and staff time to recharge ahead of the new term that begins on Monday 20th April. Therefore, no new work will be set for home learning during the weeks commencing 6th April and 13th April. There are projects pupils can access, should they wish to, over the holiday period. After the Easter holidays, schools will continue to set work in line with pupils' weekly timetables.

Communication and keeping in touch

Our main method of communication with you during this period of school closure will be through email and text, using the details you have already provided. Could I please urge you to provide any updates to mobile phone numbers for yourself and other contacts, along with changes to email addresses. If your child normally receives a free school meal your weekly vouchers will be sent to the mobile phone number/email address we hold for you. For any changes to contact details or queries regarding free school meals, please use the relevant admin email address which can be found on the "Contact Us" section of the schools' websites.

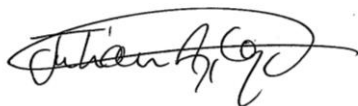
Free School Meals

With regard to free school meals, we have continued to issue vouchers and will continue to do so over the Easter holidays. You may have picked up on the reports nationally of fraudsters who are taking advantage of the current circumstances the country finds itself in. This has seen parents and carers of children who are in receipt of free school meals being targeted by scammers who have sent email messages asking for bank details. Clearly, it is important that families safeguard themselves against this.

Once again, thank you for your support and understanding as we do all that we can to try and support our community at this time.

Keep well and stay safe.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julian Appleyard', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Julian Appleyard OBE
Chief Executive Officer