



27th February 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

I wanted to write to you at the end of last term with some updates, but unfortunately the weather somewhat interfered with my plans for the final day of term. I intended to write and thank you all for your continued support and recognise formally the hard work of children and staff across the Trust schools. As you will know, on the final day of last term, I took the decision with to close our schools. Whilst we avoided significant damage, some school buildings have been impacted by the storm. A number of trees have fallen on school sites and damage has occurred to roofs and windows. Security fencing was damaged and external play and PE equipment was blown around school sites. I know one or two people were not sure that closure was the right decision, but it is clear now that it was absolutely unsafe for schools to be open during storm Eunice. I have no doubt that some children and indeed staff may have been injured if we had been in school that day. The site teams across the Trust have done their best over half-term to repair as much as possible and we have also used external contractors to clear sites ready for the new term.

School inspections

I am delighted to report that a number of external inspections have taken place last term. Some led by Ofsted and others by the Diocese of Bath and Wells. Ofsted have visited Midsomer Norton Primary School and St Mark's Secondary School and in both cases the outcome from inspection was extremely positive. The reports for both schools will be out shortly and will confirm the previous high standards in each school have been maintained and increased since they were last visited by Ofsted. These inspections also confirm that the Trust schools are in good health and doing well. The support from the Trust for both schools was praised by Inspectors, confirming again the impact of collaboration across schools for the good of all children.

St Mark's also had a SIAMS inspection undertaken by the Diocese. The scope of these is much wider than in the past and to receive a 'good', as St Mark's did, is a positive indicator of pastoral care in particular. St Mary's Primary School in Timsbury also received a 'good' SIAMS inspection earlier in the year. Again this shows the rapid improvement taking place at the school. Well done to all those working in all 3 schools, as well as Trust colleagues who have provided support for St Mary's, Midsomer Norton Primary and St Mark's.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine.

I am sure many of you will have watched the events in Ukraine unfold over the last 6 days or so. I have asked all headteachers to run a programme of assemblies to reassure pupils as much as we can, about this current conflict. I have also asked them to help pupils understand why this war has happened and a little on the history of Europe if not already covered in the school curriculum.

There will be an impact on us all, largely felt economically, but also through increased cybercrime. Buckler's Mead School was hit by a ransomware attack in half term and this is likely to have come from Russian sources. The attack damaged their IT system and it has been difficult to restore full IT functionality to the school ready for the new term.

Covid restrictions

You will know I am sure, that the Government has relaxed most of the COVID-19 restrictions from 24th February. This means that face coverings are not generally required in schools and there is no requirement to test regularly, or isolate except if you have a positive test result. Good hand hygiene and ventilation remain important ways to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Therefore, please remind your children to continue using hand sanitiser provided, or wash their hands well with hot water and soap.





Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

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I have summed up the guidance for schools in the bullet points below:

- If your child has any of the main symptoms of Covid-19 (a recent onset of a new continuous cough; a high temperature; or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell) you should order a PCR test for them. Your child should stay at home and avoid contact with other people while they wait for the test result.
- If you can, you should let people who your child may have been in close contact with know about the positive test result.
- Children and young people with Covid-19 should not attend school while they are infectious. They should take an LFD test from five days after their symptoms started (or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms) followed by another one the next day. If both these test results are negative they should return to school, as long as they feel well enough to do so and do not have a temperature.
- If you or your child lives with, or have stayed overnight in the household of someone who has Covid-19, you or your child are advised for ten days to:
 - minimise contact with the person who has Covid-19;
 - avoid contact with anyone you or your child knows who is at higher risk of becoming severely unwell
 - limit close contact with other people outside of your household, especially in crowded, enclosed or poorly-ventilated spaces;
 - wear a well-fitting face covering made with multiple layers or a surgical face mask in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces and where you or your child are in close contact with other people.
- However, children and young people who live with someone who has Covid-19 should still continue to attend work as normal and abide by the guidance above.

I am again hopeful that we will begin to move towards greater normality and thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards

Alun Williams
CEO

