



# Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

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Executive Headteacher/CEO: Alun Williams

Registered Address: Norton Hill School, Charlton Road, Midsomer Norton, BA3 4AD

Company No: 7365778

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Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you managed to enjoy the good weather over the Easter break, albeit in lockdown. I am writing to you with some further updates following a busy couple of weeks during which schools have remained open for vulnerable children and those of frontline workers.

Updates:

- 1) Teachers have resumed setting new work as of Monday and we are now nearly at a point where we have a definitive list of children that have struggled to access work or simply not engaged. The latter group is confined largely to secondary schools and fortunately, the number is relatively small. Thank you for your support in these unprecedented times. We all know it is difficult, and even Teachers and Teaching Assistants with their own children at home have found the last 4 weeks a challenge!

At this stage, we still have no formal word on when schools might re-open, but I am communicating my views to the DFE and if it is safe to do so, we would like to return to school before the summer break to establish routines and work patterns. **What is clear however, is that it is highly unlikely that we will return to school before June. Therefore, you should assume that most children will continue to work at home for the next 5/6 weeks.**

- 2) On Monday the Government launched the new [BBC Bitesize](#) resources and the [Oak National Academy](#). Schools will use these resources and they will also be available to children and parents via the internet.
- 3) Headteachers in the Trust are discussing with me the possibility of booster summer/autumn sessions for those children that have struggled to access work. These would be designed to help children who have fallen behind to catch up and be ready for the new academic year. At this point, we are not sure how these will work, but they could be run as a Summer School, or as additional after-school sessions early in next academic year.
- 4) Year 11 and 13 grades – we are still waiting for final confirmation of the methodology that will be employed to award grades. **I can confirm however, that we will not be holding any additional school-based assessments to determine final grades.** Yesterday I completed an online consultation about the preferred method and we expect a final decision to be made at the end of April. It would seem likely that what has already been communicated to you in previous letters, will be the preferred methodology. One area of debate nationally is whether to base grades on the trend of school results, or the average over the last 5 years. For most of our schools, the 3 year trend is very strong and the average is also favourable. Indeed the Trust was in the top 20% of Multi-Academy Trusts last year for secondary school outcomes.
- 5) Year R, 1, 2 and 6 tests – we have yet to receive information about how outcomes for these tests will be calculated. Some may be deferred, for example the phonics screening test, while others are likely to be teacher assessments. Whatever the decision, we will need to look very carefully at provision for children when they return if they are in Reception or Key Stage 1 in particular, as these children will have missed proportionately, a great deal of their schooling. To reassure those parents of younger children, we do have this in hand and have plans to adjust curriculum and learning on our return to school. We have similar plans for other year groups too of course and in secondary schools, Year 10 and Year 12 will be a significant focus.





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- 6) The national Free School Meal voucher scheme has been overwhelmed with the website crashing repeatedly. Over the last week, the issues with the web site have been ironed out. However, we know there are some very vulnerable families in our school communities and as a result of this, we are planning to offer emergency food parcels to families in crisis. Headteachers will be asked to identify those families for whom this may apply and we hope to get these in place this week for collection.

In other news, I have been working with the DFE to ensure that the new Norton Hill Primary School can open in September. The lockdown has caused a delay in building work and it will now not be finished until October. However, we still have permission to open and it will be based for the first month or so at Longvernal Primary School, which was expanded and refurbished last year. The new building is stunning and when completed, will be available for all other schools to use and benefit from its facilities.

St Mary's church of England Primary in Timsbury and St Mark's Church of England Secondary School in Bath, will both officially join the Trust on May 1<sup>st</sup>. This is very exciting for us and for these schools, although we have of course been working closely with them for some time.

The arrival of St Mark's school will also support our work on the development of a City of Bath Cluster. As many of you will know, we have a Memorandum of Understanding with Hayesfield Girls' School which has been very productive and Beechen Cliff School is already part of the Trust. We hope that over time we can develop these relationships further so that there is more collaborative working across the city.

Finally, congratulations to Beechen Cliff School which was graded 'good' for its Boarding Provision just prior to the lockdown. This is a tremendous achievement, as the safeguarding requirements for boarding are very stringent and this would indicate the school is likely to be graded at least 'good' in their next full inspection.

Please do your best to keep positive in these difficult times and if you need help or advice then please contact your school or for me directly via my PA, Sharon Crane.

Kind regards

Alun Williams  
MNSP CEO

