



Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

www.midsomernortonschoolspartnership.com

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Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to update you on actions taking place across MNSP Trust schools at this time of national crisis. Before I launch into the updates however, I wanted to formally welcome St Mary's Church of England Primary School in Timsbury and St Mark's Church of England Secondary School in Bath to the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership. I know many of you will be aware that we were expecting these two schools to join the Trust, but until the actual day of legal change occurs, you never quite know if we will 'make it over the line' so to speak. I am delighted that both schools have joined us and know they too share our vision of ensuring children can attend good or better schools, where they can be happy and receive outstanding care. They also recognise that achieving this is much easier if we collaborate effectively. Both schools bring a wealth of expertise and will no doubt be able to contribute to the Trust in the months and years to come. So, a very warm welcome to all parents and carers of each school and of course the children.

Updates relating to the Coronavirus crisis

The plan for re-opening of schools

At this point, we have received very little detail from the government on the topic of re-opening, but we have been asked by the DFE to share our views on how this might work. I suspect there will be more information next week for schools, based on national feedback and other data. However, we have now completed risk assessments and produced a planning document to use when we are eventually told how schools will reopen. We have also purchased PPE equipment and have received delivery of £4000 worth of hand sanitiser to distribute to schools. The central Trust budget will pay for these items to lift that cost burden from schools. We are also using our 3D printers in secondary schools to manufacture visors. We have passed many of these already to the NHS, but have also produced some for use in schools if required. The Trust has also worked on a curriculum planning tool to support children when they return. We know that there will be a great deal of social and emotional issues to cover, as well as revision of subject learning.

Free School Meals

Firstly, I believe some of the issues surrounding the national voucher scheme have now been ironed out. If you are still struggling, please do contact your school for support. We have produced a number of food parcels for those families who have been experiencing difficulties buying food and for whom the voucher scheme has been delayed.

Secondly, we are aware that many families will have experienced a significant drop in income at this time of national crisis. Please do check if your child or children might now be eligible for free school meals. To check if you may be eligible please click on this link - <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

School-to-home contact

I have asked all schools to telephone the parents/carers of every child over the coming weeks. This call is designed to check in on how families are coping with the demands of lockdown and to offer support with any issues that we reasonably can. I know too, that some teachers will have spoken directly to children to help them with on-line learning. I hope this is useful and as I have said before, if we can help we will and if we cannot offer a solution to a problem you might be experiencing, we can put you in contact with organisations that can help. I know a lot of parents and carers have found this really helpful, so thank you for your positive feedback.





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Pupil work in Year 11

Year 11 work has now been completed across Trust schools. We are now turning our attention to preparing this year group for their next steps after compulsory schooling, at what is a very challenging time for them. Students who are planning to return to one of the Sixth Forms will begin to receive Sixth Form preparation work based on their subject offers. Those students who are planning to move to college or undertake an apprenticeship should receive preparation work from the provider. If you feel that your son or daughter has not received anything to support their preparation for next year, please do contact their school directly and they will be able to source materials or put you in contact with the provider. Careers advisors are also available for all Year 11 pupils should that be required at this point. They will also be available on and after results days later this year.

IT equipment from Central Government for vulnerable children

We have made our application to the DFE for additional IT equipment. The supplier assigned to us is now putting together our order and we hope to receive the equipment for distribution in the next few weeks. If you are struggling with internet access or lack of functioning IT equipment, please do contact schools directly for support. I know schools have been able to help on many occasions when requests have been made.

Transition arrangements – Children starting in Reception and Children starting in Year 7

We would now be well into our programmes for transition for key year groups. Clearly, the way we manage transition this year will need to be very different. I wanted to reassure parents and carers that we are planning other ways to help children settle into their new school or indeed, their first school. In the case of Year 6 into 7, secondary schools will be contacting primaries and parents/carers to seek their views and we are looking into the possibilities of virtual school tours or later induction days if permitted.

For Reception aged children, teachers will be contacting parents to discuss arrangements and reassure them that a full induction process will take place to support the very youngest children in our schools to make a positive start.

I am sure after Sunday when we will all learn a little more about the government plans to ease the lockdown, I will be writing to you again with further details on how schools will begin to operate and hopefully re-open.

Many thanks for your continued support and hard work as parents and carers at home.

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams
CEO

