



# Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

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9<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am sure you will have seen the recent very last minute announcement from the DFE suggesting that Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December could be used as an INSET day in schools. Although this sounds appealing, schools will have to make this time up in the current academic year. Additionally, we have already committed almost all of our INSET day time for legitimate training activities.

**After due consideration, I have decided that all mainstream schools in the MNSP Trust will remain open as planned on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December for the following reasons:**

- 1) We will as I have said, need to make this time up which would result in disruption at another point in the year.
- 2) It is very late notice to inform parents/carers and expect them to arrange childcare, etc.
- 3) A number of schools have events planned on this last day to celebrate Christmas or consolidate learning/help pupils catch-up. We know that on-line learning has improved, but it is still poor by comparison with face-to-face contact with teachers and support staff.
- 4) It is yet more last-minute disruption when we have already had plenty this year.

Ultimately, it is my belief that schools should remain open so that we can ensure children continue to receive the education they are entitled to. It is unclear what might happen in the New Year with the virus and therefore I feel we should make the most of the time we have with children this term.

Clearly, if the DFE wish to alter their view and opt for a full closure day, I would support this provided that an additional learning day was added later in the year. I feel that the current suggestion is unhelpful and contradictory of current policy.

Finally, many of you may not be aware that we can alter term dates and INSET days without DFE permission. We choose not to do this, despite challenges we face in school each year even without a pandemic. We keep to the planned opening times to give clarity and structure for parents/carers, staff and agencies with whom we work.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support during this difficult time and hope that you understand the rationale behind my decision.

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams  
CEO

