

20 April 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that this letter finds you and your family safe and well. I thought it a good time to provide a general update on the situation across our eight schools in the Trust.

You will be aware that our two hubs at Carleton High School and De Lacy Primary School remained open during the Easter holidays for the children of key workers and those children that may be vulnerable. These two schools will remain open for this provision for the foreseeable future given that the Government have confirmed that no decision has been made on a timetable for re-opening schools.

Home Learning

Thank you to those parents and carers that took the time to complete the online survey on home learning. The responses were overwhelmingly positive and on behalf of the staff in schools I would like to thank you for your support. Equally, we welcomed the suggestions and comments about things that we could tweak in order to enhance the provision. I know that school leaders are working with their teams to look at building in some of these ideas where possible. School leaders will be writing to you towards the end of this week with an update.

As I have mentioned in previous updates, it is important that we try to get the balance of work right and we do not wish to bombard you with home learning. You will see later in this update more information about the new home learning resources that were announced nationally over the weekend. These are important. However, I have stressed to school leaders that we should try to ensure minimal disruption to learning but, also, that we do not overwhelm pupils and parents. One of the things that I have been very keen to stress to all leaders across our schools is the community aspect of school life. I appreciate that pupils are communicating with each other via social media and maintaining contact with friends but the fact is that pupils will be missing the school community. Our staff across our schools are very mindful of that and we are trying to respond to that need also.

Government Announcements

You may now be aware of the announcements from the Secretary of State yesterday. Firstly, the online package to support online learning provided by the Oak National Academy. I have provided the link below to a series of resources and lessons for pupils from reception through to year 10. These will complement the resources that schools in the Trust have provided. This week the BBC are enhancing their own education package with access to daily lessons. The link is below. Additionally, the Government information, guidance and support for parents and carers of children who are learning at home can be found through the link below. This includes specific advice for parents on how education can continue at home for children [aged 2-4](#), at [primary school](#) and [with special educational needs and disabilities](#).

<https://www.thenational.academy/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zn9447h>

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/supporting-your-childrens-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=cab989cd-0d5a-4ac7-9145-6445159c785f&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Secondly, the Government announced that disadvantaged children will receive devices such as laptops as part of a push to make remote education accessible for pupils at home. We will be working to access this scheme through the official channels.

Free School Meals

The numerous problems with the Edenred Free School Meal system has been well documented in the press including difficulties obtaining the vouchers and problems redeeming them at major supermarkets. I am very sorry if you have experienced these problems and understand how difficult this must be for you. The problem is a national one but I want to assure you we are doing everything we can to help you in the meantime. The matter has been raised at the highest levels with the Department for Education by many across the education sector. I hope this puts pressure on Edenred to resolve these problems with the urgency it needs.

Once again, thank you for the continued support.

With very best wishes,

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

Julian Appleyard OBE
Chief Executive Officer