

8 March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that this letter finds you and yours well, in an extremely positive week for our children and young people. I know I speak for leaders and staff in all of our schools when I say it is great to see the re-opening of our family of schools this week. It has now been almost a year since the beginning of the disruption to children's lives. All of us will be hoping that the end is now in sight, and that there will be no more national lockdowns of schools.

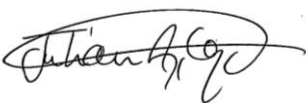
I wanted to briefly write to you about the re-opening of our schools. It is wonderful for the Pontefract community to have our children and young people back with friends, and enjoying the structure that school life brings. We have all read in the press phrases like, "catch up", "recovery", and "COVID generation". Most of the headlines are about how bad things are, however, our children and young people have shown great resilience over the last 12 months. Such resilience should be praised in droves. Our children and young people have made many sacrifices and their lives have been disrupted, and it is so important that they catch up on the experiences of childhood as life begins to return to some normality.

All leaders and staff will be keeping a focus on the positives. Clearly, some children will be behind, but children often demonstrate great fortitude and many of our pupils have thrived with the remote offer. School leaders in our schools are all working to make sure that staff deliver the full curriculum in a way that will allow children to make up for lost learning time rapidly. We believe that catching up is very achievable. The conversations with leaders in the Trust have been about diagnosing where there are deficits in learning, and tailoring our support appropriately. Our school leaders will be focusing equally on pupil well-being and children's social experiences in the schools, just as much as catching up with learning. Spending time with friends and getting involved with extracurricular activities will be an important stepping-stone to help our pupils get back on track. As ever, we would ask for your support as we resume school life routines, particularly with attendance, with all children being in school on time and ready to learn.

I know that for our young people in Year 11 at Carleton High School and The King's School who would have been sitting examinations this summer, it has been a worrying time. As CEO of the Trust, I can assure you that secondary school leaders are doing everything possible in the schools to ensure that your children are awarded the appropriate grades in each subject. I would urge all parents and carers to support the message of keep working hard, as all Year 11 pupils can still influence their final grades. Parents and carers will receive more details from both schools once the examination boards have provided all the information we need.

Once again, thank you for your support. It has been a very tough year for all of us. Let us be optimistic as we reopen this week and continue our work together as a community of pupils, parents, carers and teachers to unlock all of our children's potential.

Yours faithfully



Julian Appleyard OBE
Chief Executive Officer