



The Consortium Trust

Where together excellence and pupils thrive

Covid-19 update for Parents and Carers

10th July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Happy Friday to you all and as we now approach the last full week of what has been a bizarre and challenging school year, I am full of admiration, respect and thanks for the efforts of our school staff and pupils. They have been truly remarkable. I am also very aware of the impact that the changing school provision has placed on parents, may I thank you all again for your support, encouragement and patience.

While the covid-19 pandemic has thrown a shed load of disruption, anxiety and pain at us all – it has also demonstrated that the strength of the human spirit and our ability to adapt to a fast changing environment has been 'promoted' to primary life skills for us all. Those of you that know me well, will appreciate that I have never been phased by change – in fact I relish it. It is an opportunity to challenge our thinking, develop our practice and improve the impact we have on the lives of others. I also know that other people find change difficult to cope with and we must be respectful and considerate when supporting our school communities through a transition period. There are so many 'quotes' on change – but I feel that this one explains our journey for the coming weeks and months. Covid-19 has provided us all with a mirror to reflect in – we have been through a crisis together, think what we can achieve if we seize the opportunity.

Don't be afraid to
CHANGE.
You may lose
something good
but you may gain
something better.

In recent weeks I have been working with a group of staff from across our Trust, to look at the government announcements around full school re-opening in September and the need to support pupils to 'catch-up'. We all know that there has been significant disruption to your children's learning this year and we must look at how we can do different and do better. There are significant issues ahead, I have no doubt of that. I am also absolutely convinced that we have the strength of character, determination and skills to work collectively to achieve the amazing. I will be reporting next week on the recommendations of the 'Build Back Better' working party and how that will affect our schools, staff, pupils and you as parents, please be assured that throughout we have been guided by three principles:

- happy learners are a result of content staff;
- children have one shot at primary education;
- every action is to be driven by our values and principles.

I appreciate that parents require as much time as possible to adapt to any changes and I will be outlining next week detailed proposals for Consortium Trust schools. I have been bound by time frames beyond my control, the Department for Education are not particularly fast at releasing information, and an announcement in the news may take several days or weeks to come through as actual written guidance.

Registered in England and Wales, Private Limited Company by guarantee, without share capital. Company number: 10255142.

Registered office address: 27 Norwich Road, Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 8BX.

www.consortiumacademy.org. Tel.No: 01986 835670. Email: businesssupport@consortiumacademy.org

Principal & CEO: Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne. Email: principal@consortiumacademy.org



The Consortium Trust

Where together excellence and pupils thrive

The full DfE guidance on reopening schools was only published a few weeks ago and before any changes can be made, I am duty bound to have 'timely and meaningful' discussions with our staff and Unions this all takes time. Parents will also be aware of the significant amount of money for education, catch-up support, personal tutoring and investment in school buildings and facilities. Unfortunately while we all know from the media the billions announced there has been little or no details on how we can access these funds or what the allocation to our Trust will be.

In advance of the detailed proposals next week I can assure you:

- I will be using every penny of the money we get to invest in even better provision for your children;
- That while we must follow the legal position that school attendance will be compulsory from September, we will work with parents that remain anxious about this step and punitive measures will be the absolute last resort;
- Children on return will receive a period of transition back into full time education, focusing on mental health, resilience, pastoral care. Ensuring that they are learn ready;
- We will be increasing the amount of direct contact time, so children get even more time with teachers and support staff.

Finally some good news around building projects:

- The refurbishment of Helmingham Primary is almost complete and contractors will be packing up very soon;
- The swimming pool at Yoxford and Peasenhall Primary will be completed in time for January 2021 when swimming can return to the curriculum;
- St Edmund's Primary, Beech class will be remodelled with a new style of 'fitted furniture' to remove clutter and maximise space.
- Kirkley Nursery is receiving a full make-over including new ICT provision.
- Henley Primary will start its £225,000 refurbishment programme, later in the month.

I hope have a great weekend, the sun is returning.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne
CEO & Principal

Cc: Trust Board and Members
Locality Committee members