



The Consortium Trust

Where together excellence and pupils thrive

Staff briefing – 27th August 2020

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to be welcoming you back to a new academic year and after the disruption, confusion and concern of last year, I am sure we all hope for a more normal year ahead. I hope that you have all taken the summer to recharge batteries and prepare for the challenges and changes ahead. While we all yearn for normality we have to acknowledge that the pandemic has and will continue to impact on our work.

Build Back Better Strategy

As I advised before the summer break, the Build Back Better Working Party, produced a detailed report with recommendations that have been accepted by the Trust Board and are to be implemented from the start of the academic year. I have been heartened by the positive response to our strategy from many colleagues but equally acknowledge that some have concerns about some aspects of the strategy. I have been engaging with professional bodies and Trade Unions over the summer and those discussions will continue – it is important to look at the strategy in its entirety. I strongly believe that not only is the strategy appropriate to address the gaps that many pupils will have but also acknowledges the contribution of staff in delivering the strategy. I am confirming that core contact hours for primary age pupils will be 0830 to 1530. With our curriculum enrichment programme being implemented over the autumn term and will be embedded by January 2021.

Loyalty Holiday Bonus Scheme

I am pleased to provide colleagues with a draft proposal (details at the end of this briefing) for the introduction of a 'loyalty holiday bonus scheme' that I propose to trial this year. I hope that colleagues recognise that this is a significant step to reward you, our hardworking staff. The scheme will be monitored and reviewed by the Well-being Champions and the Build Back Better Task and Finish Group and we will be collecting feedback from staff as the scheme progress.

Summer term 2021 PD Days

I can further advise that the 19th and 20th July 2021 PD days for our primary schools will be disaggregated and will be applied to offset Central and School staff meetings during the academic year, therefore the school year will end pupils and school based staff on the 16th July 2021.

New Developments

Over the summer the central team including our estate management team have been working incredibly hard to ensure that we are covid-secure and ready to welcome all pupils back. We have refurbished and redecorated various locations, major projects including Helmingham School's refurbishment and Yoxford and Peasenhall swimming pool are close to completion. With a major renovation of Henley School now underway.

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Most excitingly of all we have turned around a closed nursery school, recruiting an entire staff team, redecorating, re-equipping in under four weeks and I am delighted to welcome the Kirkley Nursery and EYFS Centre of Excellence as our twelfth establishment.

Welcome to our colleagues

In addition to our new nursery colleagues at Kirkley, we also welcome a new Academy Head for Borders, newly recruited teachers, teaching assistants and apprentices across the Trust – this is at a time when other schools are cutting staff and this is a further example of our Trust's commitment to excellence in education in our settings and for our pupils. I would like to offer a heartfelt welcome to all our new colleagues.

COVID-Secure

As you will expect I have been monitoring the updated DfE guidance over the summer in relation to government response to the covid-19 pandemic. The Trust is keen to ensure that we work with all stakeholders including staff to ensure that we can all return to work in confidence and in safety. Academy Heads and Line Managers will advise of specific site measures. School risk assessments have gone through a robust process of review – including a timely and meaningful staff consultation at the end of last term. As part of the PD days you will be lead through how this will affect your practice and we welcome your feedback on how to improve our covid-security further.

PPE

DfE has confirmed that schools will shortly receive a delivery of a small amount of personal protective equipment and an initial supply of ten home test kits. The PPE is a one-off distribution and will contain clinical face masks, aprons, gloves and visors, as well as the hand sanitiser needed to put on and take off PPE. Deliveries via Royal Mail began yesterday (26th August). Visors will be sent as a separate delivery.

Home-testing kit deliveries via Royal Mail also began yesterday (26th August). Email notifications have or will be sent two days before delivery. DfE advises that you should only offer a home test kit to individuals who have developed symptoms while at school or to their parent or carer if the child is under 18 in the exceptional circumstance that you believe they may have barriers to accessing a test elsewhere, and that giving them a home test kit directly will therefore significantly increase the likelihood of them getting tested. If schools have not received their test kits by the start of their term, please contact the Test and Trace helpdesk on 119.

While the DfE are still advising against face covering in primary schools, I have taken the decision to provide all colleagues with a face shield/visor that can be worn in school, we have received an additional stock of visors. While the medical evidence states that the risk of infection in primary schools remains very low, I am also aware that some will be concerned. I hope that the provision of personal visors will be seen as a positive step. The wearing of face masks and gloves is not encouraged and visors while not necessary are available to colleagues, should you wish. I stress that this is a personal choice and there is no pressure to wear or not wear them.

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Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline

The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline is available to answer questions about COVID-19 relating to education and children's social care. Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline by calling: Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours: Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm.

Useful links to government guidance documents:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe?utm_source=25%20August%202020%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak?utm_source=25%20August%202020%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-home-test-kits-for-schools-and-fe-providers?utm_source=25%27August%202020%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C190%20for%20pupils,%20teachers%20and%20staff

I am sorry for such a long staff briefing, but I hope that it provides you with a sense of what the new term and academic year will bring. I am very optimistic that this year is going to be very successful for us as a Trust and that success is built on the dedication and enthusiasm of each and every one of us. Thank you again for what you have done and will do.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne
CEO & Principal

Cc: Locality Committee
Members and Trustees



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DRAFT

Loyalty Scheme 2020-2021

Author: Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne, CEO and Principal

26th August 2020

Dear Colleague,

I am delighted to advise you as part of our 'Build Back Better' programme that focusses on staff well-being and rewarding loyalty. **The Trust will be trialling for the next academic year a 'Loyalty Scheme'** to reward staff that have excellent attendance this will be in addition to the Trust's 'Thank You Day' scheme that was successfully introduced last year. The Build Back Better task and finish group and the Staff Well-Being Forum will monitor the impact, success and any areas to refine and the Trust Board will consider whether the Loyalty Scheme continues and becomes a further benefit for our colleagues.

In essence the Loyalty Scheme allows staff to accrue bonus minutes towards additional day's holiday, for staff that work a full week i.e. Monday to Friday, for every full week attended a 60 minute bonus will be allocated. Part time staff will accrue pro-rata equivalent, the maximum number of days additional holiday is capped at 5 full days in an academic year. For example, for a full time, term time only colleague that have achieved 30 weeks of full attendance, will accrue 30 hours or 4.5 (6.5 hour) days of holiday. It should be noted that the minimum time allocation is in 5 minute blocks and time will be rounded down to the nearest 30 minute block when colleagues decide to take the time.

Full attendance means that the staff colleague attends every day in full as per their contract, if time is taken for ill health, Thank you day, personal and medical appointments or Loyalty scheme time this would not count as a full week and therefore the loyalty scheme bonus does not apply. It is important that staff only attend work when they are well and the loyalty scheme is intended to reward attendance and not stigmatise absence due to ill health.

Loyalty days can be taken at any point during the year and colleagues will be encouraged to do so, days can only be taken when the school/establishment can operationally cope with the colleague absence and must be agreed in advance with the Academy Head/line manager. Colleagues should avoid 'saving up' large of blocks of time for use at the end of terms and local leaders will manage the allocation of loyalty days at these potentially popular times.

The loyalty day can be withdrawn in the event of an emergency or a special event that requires colleagues' attendance, including an Ofsted inspection. In any event the Academy Heads/line managers' decision is final.

Loyalty scheme bonuses cannot be accrued or taken if the colleague is in dispute with the Trust or has a professional intervention in place.

Loyalty days cannot be carried forward from one academic year to the next, unless in exceptional circumstances and with the express approval of the CEO.

The Trust is offering the trial in good faith, are seeking colleague active and fair participation and will be inviting colleagues to feedback on the successes and areas to development. The trial is scheduled to conclude at the end of the 2020/21 academic year. The Trust Board will evaluate the impact of the scheme, reflect on feedback and will consider whether the scheme will be continued.

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