



Monday 30th November 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, Carers, Children and Young People

I wanted to start with an apology that I have been unable to write to you until today, despite my promise of weekly updates.

The last week has seen a significant amount of activity - we have been in direct contact with the DfE and the Education Minister to request clarity on the expectations on schools, staff and families in the run up to the Christmas break.

Thursday's announcement from the Prime Minister, along with our direct discussions with the RSC have cemented the Government's position that school will continue, as planned, until 18th December. However, we are working with leaders across the Trust to try and find ways to reduce the load at the end of term. Over the next couple of weeks, we will be setting out our plans. Many of our schools are currently closing to pupils on a Friday afternoon as part of a local response to Covid-19 and I wanted to enable all of our schools to have this option on **Friday 18th December**, if it is appropriate for them to do so. This will be a local decision, based on the circumstances and needs of each school, and must reflect the requirements of supporting the safe and secure departure of pupils, families and staff from the school on the last day of term. I am aware that in many of our schools, there are a lot of activities planned right up until the last minute, and so the decision to close after lunch will need to be balanced against the activities planned, and the needs of the pupils.

The new-tiered system.

As you will have heard the Government announced the new tier system. Swindon and Wiltshire are in Tier 2 and Bristol is in Tier 3. More information about the tiers can be found here [Local restriction tiers: what you need to know - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know). We have already started to review the impact that this may have on our schools. At this stage we do not envisage any Trustwide changes to how we are working; but each local authority area may well put in specific requirements for their local area based on the tier that they are in. Each school is asked to adhere to the Trust guidance, and the local guidelines, and your child's school will let you know if there are likely to be changes to the way that the schools are running, or if there are further requirements on everyone. Each school will update and adapt its risk assessments and approaches to keep in line with the local rules; and we would ask that everyone please help us in following those rules to ensure the safety of everyone and to reduce the spread of the virus. Thank you.

Links to Government updates and guidance for parents.

Up to date information published by the Government can be found via the following link:

[What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak)



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'Let your light shine' (Matt 5:15)

This information was last updated on 27th November to reflect the local restrictions, including changes to the sections on shielding, face coverings, school and college trips and extra-curricular activities.

Next week I will start to set out our planned approach to the end of term, and our return to school plan for January 2021. There is still a great deal to enjoy of this term left – and a lot of exciting and festive activities planned in school over the forthcoming weeks.

Stay safe and keep well.

With kind regards,

Jez Piper

CEO

Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust