



Thursday 17th December 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, Carers, Children and Young People,

What a year it has been! I wanted to write today, as we bring 2020 to a close, to thank you for your support, guidance and for your help and resilience throughout this year as we've had to respond to the ever-changing situation around us. We continue to be grateful to you for your patience, even when the guidance has changed on a daily basis and we've had to respond quickly. Amazing things have still continued to happen in all our schools – virtual carol services and nativities, class parties and celebrations, schools have won national awards for happiness, and regional awards for church and local partnerships. Amidst everything that has been happening in the world – there has been a lot of success, innovation and enjoyment in all our schools, and that has been down to the tireless work of our staff, our wonderful children and young people, and your support. Thank you.

As we go into the Christmas period I wanted to give you a quick update on the 'what happens next?' and our plans for opening in January 2021.

All of our schools close at the end of today, and tomorrow will be an INSET Day for all of our staff.

On Friday we saw the announcement that the self-isolation period for COVID-19 has been reduced from 14 days to 10 days. People who test positive should continue to self-isolate for **10 days from onset of symptoms** or **10 days from point of taking a positive test if asymptomatic**. The NHS Test and Trace service will tell people to self-isolate for 10 days instead of 14 days. Schools also have to manage confirmed cases of COVID-19 in line with current public health guidance - this means your child may be asked to self-isolate for 10 days from the day after contact with the individual who tested positive by their nursery or school (based on advice from the PHE advice service or local health protection teams) if they have been in close, face to face contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus.

For any school-based contact tracing this means that you may be contacted by your child's school up to, and including 23rd December should a case be reported in your child's bubble. It is our great hope that we won't have to contact any of you after today, and we will only do so on the advice and guidance of Public Health England South West (PHESW). From **Friday 18th December**, please report all confirmed cases to confirmedcovid@lydiardmillicentceps.org. This email address will be monitored between 9 and 10am daily. In line with guidance, any emails received after this time will be dealt with the following day. If there is a confirmed case parents will be contacted using the school's usual communication methods (email, text or parentmail, etc).

Preparing to come back in January is a little more complex, as we can't know until the last moment what the impact of the Christmas period will have on our schools. We have planned for a variety of scenarios and I wanted to share the key aspects with you today to give you a little reassurance of what January's return to school may look like.

- **Many of our schools will be starting with an INSET on 4th January.** This will both help in the preparation of the staff, and will give those schools an additional day to ensuring correct staffing levels for opening on 5th January.



- **Possible school or bubble closures.** Whilst we hope this doesn't happen, it may be the case that we come back to some immediate bubble closures. Where this is the case your child's school will contact you as soon as is possible to advise you of the situation. Where there are any closures we will move immediately to online learning.

We ask your patience with us at the start of term as we work to ensure that we can get everyone back into school, hopefully as planned, and if not, as soon as is appropriate.

You will have seen in the news lots of reports about Covid testing in schools and changes to the ways that self-isolation may work. We have not yet been provided with the full information and guidance on this yet, and we have been advised that this will be coming at the start of January. As soon as we have full sight of the information, we will ensure that you are aware, and we will clarify how this will work for your school.

I wanted to end by wishing you all a restful, and blessed Christmas period. I hope that you are all able to do as you intended over the forthcoming two weeks and that, however you manage it, you are able to spend quality time with loved ones. My thoughts and prayers are with you all for a wonderful Christmastime, and for a happy new year. Stay safe, keep well and I look forward to meeting with you all in some way in 2021.

With kind regards, and my sincerest thanks

Jez Piper

CEO

Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust