

Dear parents and carers

5th March 2021

We can't wait to welcome all our children back to the classroom next week. The pandemic is certainly challenging all of us and there are so many ways it has had an impact on us all. But amongst the hardship and heartache there are also things to remember and celebrate as we enter a new, more hopeful phase of our Covid experience.

Firstly, we are so proud of all of our children and how they have coped with our ever-changing world and the uncertainty. Their response to learning and their resilience to the limitations they have faced have been remarkable. They are pioneers – learning in ways no generation of children have ever done before. And they have responded superbly. They have been supported both in and out of school by the strength and depth of trust and commitment between home and school. We have always talked about the importance of our partnership with you as parents, but we cannot thank you enough for your dedication, patience and positive support as we learned together how best to help your children. We have learned so much and become so much closer and that deserves celebrating.

We are also tremendously proud of our staff. Each and every one of them has done everything they can, to do the best for our children both in and out of school. Our staff have become expert problem-solvers and have provided support and encouragement to our children and families. Our teachers have worked hard helping our children to learn, be inspired and challenged. Our support staff have done exactly that - supported the school and your children so they can access learning wherever they are. Many have taken on much wider roles and been creative, inventive and generous in their efforts.

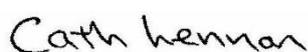
We are committed to supporting your children during our wider re-opening from March 8th. We know how desperate they, and you, are for a return to normal. But it is worth reminding ourselves that this next stage is certainly not yet normal and we do need to all remember that we could very well experience positive Covid cases and may still have to apply the self-isolation requirements to specific bubbles. We are preparing for this by ensuring we still have capacity to support remote learning, but we wanted to remind you all that you may have to be prepared for that eventuality.

We are also wholly committed to supporting our children's well-being. That commitment extends from ensuring that they are not put under pressure by worrying about learning missed, to supporting any additional anxieties they are experiencing. We will celebrate what they have learned and start from where they are. We will focus on ALL the experiences they have missed, not just the curriculum content. All our schools have planned exciting, inspirational learning schemes for the next few weeks which will allow us to see where our children are up to before the Easter break.

Finally, I wanted to pay tribute to all those who have suffered loss during this year and to those who have reached out to support them. Our communities continue to show the best of humanity in their caring and generous responses to hardship and loss.

Thank you in advance for the support I know you will continue to offer your children's school. That support has lifted staff throughout the pandemic and will continue to do so in these early, uncertain next steps.

Wishing you health and happiness ahead



Cath Lennon

Chief Education Officer

