

Swanland Education Trust

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Dear Parents and Carers

Mr Chris Huscroft
Chief Executive Officer

Well, it's now almost 11 weeks since life in our schools changed somewhat; little did we expect that we'd still be here, trying to navigate a whole new way of working and life for all of us.

Firstly, I want to say a huge thank you, to you, our families for the immense support and gratitude that you have shown to my colleagues in SET schools. Each and every member of staff has now been working in some form since we returned from half term in February; that's a total of 15 weeks without any real break from the day to day challenges of working from home; supporting you and your children, whilst for many also trying to home educate their own children!

At the peak of the virus most were at home and able to respond and work quite closely with you. Now as our schools begin to open more widely to further groups of children, staff are in school working with new groups known as 'bubbles' and often with a completely different age range of children to the ones that they usually work with. Please do understand that they will no longer be able to put in place the level of support that you have been used to. Inevitably, you will hear of other schools doing things a certain way and naturally draw comparisons to your own child's school. Please don't do this... each of our schools are unique and the approach they have to take is specific to the resources and facilities they have available to them. The schools themselves will still be making provision for home learning and will be available to speak to you – please do this in the way that your school has asked you to. Email is generally a good way to get in touch if it doesn't require immediate attention.

You will have no doubt seen the recent announcement from the government about their decision to **NOT** expect all children to return to school before the end of the summer term. For years, 2, 3, 4 and 5 this means that the next time they will officially have to return to school will be in September. Like yourselves, this came as a huge disappointment to us as we were so keen to try and get your children back to school. However, the task would be impossible in our schools, given that social distancing measures still need to be adhered to. As leaders of schools we are very aware of the impact this will be having on families and at this moment in time the wellbeing of children is at the forefront of our minds. With this in mind the Trust leaders met yesterday to discuss how we might address this in our schools. There were many suggestions put forward and now the head teacher of your child's school has gone away to work with their staff on how we can actively engage with the children, until the end of term, who won't be in school.

Furthermore, we know that as time has progressed, home learning is becoming more of a challenge, especially as parent's work is becoming greater.

We are more than aware of parent's concerns about children falling behind in their education, this is something that we are also very conscious of. However, I think it is important to say to you that all parents and schools across the country will be in exactly the same situation and as such it is my belief that any future national benchmarking will be adjusted accordingly to reflect the current situation. Therefore, please do not put pressure on yourselves and most importantly on your children. The message to you from myself and the head teachers is that you look after your child's wellbeing – please remember they will have acquired skills and knowledge throughout this time that will serve them well in future life. We've heard of children learning how to decorate at home; how to garden and how to prepare meals! We will be working really hard with your children upon their return to school to ensure that we make up for lost time, where we can and supporting them to do the best they can – just like we always have.

As a Trust we also have plans to support the teachers by giving them time to 'reset' the curriculum ensuring that the teaching and learning for your child(ren) is bespoke to their year group and will enable all to achieve the best they can.

As always, your school's head teacher will be in touch to keep you informed of any further developments specific to their school, in light of the latest announcement.

Thank you for your continuing support, now and in the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Huscroft

CEO

