



SEATON VALLEY FEDERATION OF SCHOOLS

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Dear parents/carers

Well what a week that has been! Day by day we have been amazed at what has been said about the reopening of schools and the number of people who seem to have a view on it.

However, I feel I must start this week's letter on a positive note and that is to say I have been so impressed by the attitude shown by the young people who go to our schools. Numerous people have been in contact to say how impressed they have been with them not being out and doing silly things so thank you for that.

Since Sunday, as you can imagine, we have been trying to put a plan together for the return of pupils in a way that is sensible, works and is safe. I hope that we will be able to share any plan with all those who are involved with the Federation early next week. I realise that for many of you this is a very worrying time and I totally understand that. As a Federation, we will do all we can to ease those fears as best we can. Ultimately, the decision to reopen lies with the governors and myself and if I do not feel it is safe to open on the 1st June 2020, then I will not, but I realise that at some stage, we are going to have to go back to school. The wider national discussions will of course have an impact on what we do but I am also aware that we need to make our plans.

As we continue with the extended lockdown, as a Federation we are looking at ways that we can support our young people even more. This is especially true for those pupils who may not get back to school before September.

We are going to review the online work and, whilst we know that it will never be the same as face to face teaching, we will try and make it the best we can. I realise that some parents would prefer it if we did live online lessons such as zoom. However, the decision was taken at the very start that we would not provide this and I am not going to change my mind on this.

On the issue of home-schooling work, I realise that one of the biggest issues for parents is how much should their children be doing in the unique circumstances that we all have. There is no simple answer to this as some parents want us to set more work and others don't want us to set too much work. I cannot give a blanket answer to this but, having discussed this with a number of people, I feel that how much you do is dependent on how old the child is and also by the fact that you know your child better than anyone else. So, I would suggest that those children in year 10 and 12 should be doing a fair bit of work on a daily basis, as they will have exams to think about next year. The youngest children in year 5 and 6 should be guided by you seeing how they are getting on but they should do some maths and English everyday as well as some general reading. Those pupils in years 7,8 and 9 need to be doing the same as year 5 and 6 but also some other subjects as well. Again, you know your child so you know if they can do more or need to do a bit less.

A request has been made that the year 9 pupils now only study what they are doing for their options next year. We will look into that and let you know.

I realise that the previous paragraph makes me sound like a politician of the worst kind but when it comes to how much work should the pupils be doing, there is no simple answer.

As staff, we are very aware that some pupils may be struggling with not seeing their friends or having contact with their teachers. We have already phoned many pupils to talk to them and to see how they are getting on, but we did this because parents let us know there was an issue. In response to parental feedback we are going to make calls to all pupils in the Federation over the next few weeks, just to see how they are getting on. If you feel your child would benefit from a call sooner rather than later, please let us know.

These are very strange times and we will do all we can to support your child, so please could you let us know if there is an issue we can help with.

So, a long letter this week, and I hope you understand why. Once again, thank you for all the positive comments that we have received. As we move from stage 1 of the lockdown to stage 2, we will need to continue to work together for the children.

However, I must remind everyone this virus has not gone away and we are still in a lockdown situation, so please follow the rules on social distancing and most importantly stay safe and I hope to see you all soon.

Yours sincerely



John Barnes
Executive Headteacher