



SEATON VALLEY FEDERATION OF SCHOOLS

Elsdon Avenue, Seaton Delaval, Northumberland NE25 0BP

Tel: 0191 2371505 Fax: 0191 2376891

Email: reception@svf.org.uk

www.svf.org.uk

Chair of Governors: Susan Dungworth

Executive Headteacher: John Barnes

13 November 2020

Good afternoon

I hope this letter finds you all well? I cannot believe that we are nearly half way through November and marching forward quickly to Christmas! This week has seen a number of things happening across the Federation which are almost “normal” school life.

Today we have had some Children in Need events going on which have been very successful. Year 11 at Astley have had their mock exams and all 3 schools had a Remembrance event to pay our respects to the fallen and injured soldiers. As always these Remembrance events were outstanding and our young people were an absolute credit.

With regard to exams this year at the moment the Year 6 SATs are still going ahead. The government are insistent that this will be the case for the GCSE and A level exams. However, as you will have seen the other UK countries have made different decisions. I cannot predict what the English Government will do, so at the moment we will continue to prepare the pupils in year 11 and 13 for the exams to be as normal.

On a positive note there has been a change in the plan for free school meals over the holidays and we will now wait to see what the details are. We will then work with the parents of FSM pupils to make sure that they get the support that is available to them.

On the whole the federation is working as well as it can in these very strange times, the vast majority of our young people are a credit to themselves and you. I would also like to thank all my staff for all the work that they are doing to make sure that the education experience for our young people is as good as it can be.

What is clear to me is that there is no quick end in sight to our present situation. Whilst lockdown may end on 3rd December, we will continue to have restrictions imposed on us by the response to the Covid 19 virus. It looks like we will continue to have bubbles in January 2021. There will also be other restrictions i.e. masks in place as well. I think we all have to be honest and say that this current situation will be in place until Easter at the earliest.

We now seem to have moved into another stage of Covid 19 life and education. The excitement and newness of the start of the pandemic has now been replaced by a sense of grinding days out. We all know what we have to do and why but it all seems so hard at the moment. There is no magic solution to this, all of us: young people, parents, staff and community will just have to keep working together and supporting each other to get through this period. So much of what we normally do has changed and we have things in place that I never thought I would see such as the marquees at Astley and the portaloos as well. Let me be very clear no one involved with the federation wants these things but we have to put things in place to help us get through this situation. Another example of this is how we are doing food in all 3 schools. It's not ideal but it's the best we can and we will keep trying to improve it within the Covid restrictions. I am sure that you will understand this and I would like to thank all the parents who have told us how we are doing.

One way that we need your support is reinforcing certain basic messages about the Covid 19 measures with your children. It has become very clear across all 3 schools that the young people have become a bit slack in their response to Covid. They don't seem to be washing their hands as much as they should and pupils are not using hand sanitiser consistently. Social distancing seems to have been forgotten and the wearing of masks in communal areas seems to be an issue with some pupils. As a result of this, we are having a push in all 3 schools starting next week on hand washing, using a sanitiser, wearing masks and keeping a social distance.

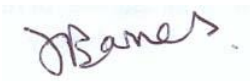
We would be very grateful if you could support us in this by reminding your children to do all of the above. All of these things will ensure that we keep Covid out of the schools as much as possible.

Whilst the announcement of a potential vaccine is great news, I think we all should be realistic that this will not sort out the current situation straight away. We must continue to ensure we keep following the Covid safe measures that we have in place to be as safe as we possibly can be. I hope that you will be able to support us with this and reinforce the messages with your children.

As always I would like to thank you for your support and wish you all the best for the weekend.

Take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "JBarnes".

John Barnes
Executive Headteacher