



# SEATON VALLEY FEDERATION OF SCHOOLS

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**Chair of Governors:** Susan Dungworth

**Executive Headteacher:** John Barnes

22 January 2021

Good afternoon

I hope that this letter finds you as well as can be expected and that your week has been a good one?

Once again this week seems as if it's been a week of uncertainty followed by confusion followed by lack of clarity so I will try and put everything in context for you and then what it means for us.

A good news story was that the national voucher free school meals system started and is now up and running. Can I thank the staff who worked hard to get this in place especially Mr Donald and Miss Cuthbertson. There was a lot of detailed work that they had to do so that everything worked. Also, Mr Watson who has led on free school meals from the start must be thanked for getting things sorted. If you are having any issues please do contact us and we will see what we can do to help.

Sadly the good news seems to stop there with regard to national things. In relation to ICT equipment the federation has now had all the "kit" we are able to access. We will keep trying to get more but we really have nothing left to offer. We are looking at what we can do so please do contact us if you are having issues.

With regard to mass testing I was surprised as you were to hear that there was a change in policy announced by the DFE this week. If your child attends one of the schools during lockdown and is in year 7 or above you will be getting a letter next week regarding what testing will be whilst we are in lockdown. With regard to mass testing and a full school opening we have had no guidance yet as to what that will be like.

Parents and carers of pupils in year 11 and 13 will be aware that there is a consultation on going about what will replace the normal exams for this year. You will have received a letter with some details about that this week. I can not stress highly enough that it is vital that the pupils in year 11 and 13 do all the on line set work so that staff have a broad band of information on which to base any assessments or grades.

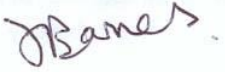
A return to "normal" school. You may have seen Gavin Williamson on television yesterday discussing many things. He was not clear about when we will have a return to school for the majority of our young people. All of us who work in the Federation want that as soon as possible but we have to follow the advice from the DFE. However, he did say that we would be given 2 weeks notice of when the return would be. That will be fantastic if that happens. I will of course communicate with you as soon as I hear anything with regard to the reopening of the schools.

This lockdown seems harder than the one in March for any number of reasons but I am always amazed at what a fantastic job our communities are doing to support each other and I am immensely proud of the work that the 3 schools are doing. If you or your child is struggling please do contact us and we will do all we can to help you or find someone who can help you.

I always like to end on a positive note and whilst much to do with education and this lockdown has been confusing and frustrating what has been amazing is how the staff have responded to the need for quality education online. This has been matched by the way that the majority of the young people have tackled the work and then your efforts in supporting and encouraging your children to do the work has been really helpful and a great support to the teachers. I really do think all of us are trying our best so thank you to everyone for all you are doing.

I hope you all have a good weekend and as always please take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Barnes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small arrow-like flourish at the end.

John Barnes  
Executive Headteacher