



SEATON VALLEY FEDERATION OF SCHOOLS

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Dear all

I hope this letter finds you well? This has certainly been a strange week for all of us. As a country we passed the terrible milestone of 100,000 deaths from Covid. This is something none of us ever thought would happen yet sadly it has. I doubt that there is a family that has not been affected by this terrible figure of loss. If you have I send you my deepest sympathies and condolences. There are no words to express just how sad and devastating this figure is. I think we all have to admit that the news this week along with the continued hospital admissions, continued high daily death rates and infection rates means that we still have a long way to go with our fight against Covid and its impacts on our lives.

Alongside that we had the news on Wednesday that schools will continue to be closed to the majority of students after the half term holidays. The Prime Minister did say that he is hoping that the schools will open on the 8th March but I think all of us are aware now that what is hoped for with regard to this pandemic does not always happen! As a federation we will wait to see what details emerge before we make any public announcements. But as always we will try and do what is right for our young people, their families, the staff and the wider communities. Also we will let you know as soon as we can what the plans are.

I know the thought of at least another 5 and a half weeks of home education seems a really hard thing and to be truthful none of us want it. But you and your children are doing a great job. We know it's hard and we will do all we can to support you. This system is never going to be perfect but between the support of you, the efforts of the young people and the quality work staff are setting, we are doing the very best that we can. No one finds online learning easy and we should all take a moment to remember just what everyone is going through and doing and be thankful for everyone's efforts.

This week also saw the 3 schools begin testing the pupils who are in school and the staff and that went well so many thanks to all of those who have been involved in the setting up of the system.

I am also pleased to say that due to the generosity of Seaton Valley Council we have been given £7,000 to spend on ICT equipment for pupils to access. As soon as the equipment comes in we will be in contact to see how we can help those people who need it. There have also been a number of people who have individually made donations to the Federation to help buy ICT equipment for pupils who need it. May I say a massive thank you to everyone who has done this. Your generosity is a marvellous thing.

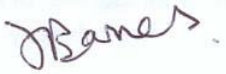
Half term is 2 weeks away and I need to let you know that none of the schools will be open over half term for any pupil nor will any online learning be set by staff. I think it's safe to say we all need a holiday, although I doubt we will be able to do much in it!

There are things to look forward to and be positive about such as the vaccine roll out and the efforts of our schools, pupils, staff, parents and carers and the community in battling through this very hard time. But it is a week I think when all of us have been struck by the enormity of what we are dealing with and its massive impact on all of us.

Finally on a personal note this week I have not been in school as I lost a close family member to Covid on Saturday. I would like to pay special thanks to my colleagues on the Senior Leadership Team who have ensured that the 3 schools have continued to be the amazing places that we all know they are. I am truly lucky to have such a fantastic team of staff working in the 3 schools and I pay them the highest compliment I possibly can. I hope that as parents and carers you too are grateful for all they do no matter what role they perform.

I wish you all the very best 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 and is positioned above the printed name.

John Barnes
Executive Headteacher