



SEATON VALLEY FEDERATION OF SCHOOLS

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2 July 2021

Good afternoon

As we get ever closer to the end of term I never imagined we would have such a challenging week as the one we have just had. Like many I thought we were going to have a slight issue with an increase in Covid cases and self isolation when the unlocking happened but I never expected it to be as it has been this week.

Thankfully we have had very few positive cases amongst both the young people and the staff. In fact it is only today that we have had to send a group of about 20 pupils home to self isolate from Seaton Sluice Middle School. Any other cases have not impacted on the schools in the federation. This is very rare as so many schools locally and in Northumberland have had to send pupils home.

I hope that this is because of the great efforts shown by all the members of the federation and the covid secure actions that we have in place. I also hope that this continues until the end of term. I must stress that if your child is showing any symptoms of Covid please do not send them into school. Do all the testing that needs to be done and let us know what is happening. We can support and offer guidance if you are not sure what to do.

Whilst we have not had many students absent this week at times we have had up to 25 staff absent. Of those only one had Covid. The rest were either self isolating due to family contacts, self isolating due to track and trace identifying that they needed to or were of because of child care. In spite of all that we kept all 3 schools open and offered as normal an experience as we could. I must say here that the staff have been outstanding in how they have responded to this very difficult situation and I would like to thank them all for all they have done.

However, the rise in cases locally and the number of staff absent has meant we have had to make some difficult decisions and one of these was to cancel our transition process for this year. This was not a decision we took lightly but it was one that we had to make. There are other changes that have had to be made and the individual schools will let you know about those.

I know many of you will be wondering and worrying about what is going to happen in September especially given that any announcements are likely to be made once we are on holiday or very close to when we break up. I am also aware that the government is planning on a full opening from July 19th 2021 and whilst many of us want this we also have to be aware we have kept Covid out of our schools very well and we want to make sure that come September we are as safe as we can be whilst also having a normal school experience for everyone.

As we have had no guidance or advice yet from the Department of Education I can not tell you what is going to happen. I am sorry about that but I suppose by now we are all used to late announcements from the DFE which results in plans being shared with you late as well. However, what I can say is that whatever the situation in September we will continue some of the Covid secure practices such as increased cleaning and handwashing etc. I will share with you as soon as possible the full plans. I expect that I will be asking you to check emails and school communications at the end of August for full details of any plans.

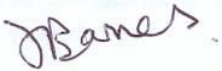
What I will promise is that we will do all we can to make next year's education as normal and as exciting as we possibly can.

I will write to you before the end of term with an update on where we are with regards to next year and also to reflect on how well we all have done this year and to say goodbye to those staff who are leaving the Federation this year.

Until then I hope you have a great weekend and that if football is your thing that the match on Saturday goes the way you want it too.

Please stay safe, take care and all the best.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JBarnes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

John Barnes
Executive Headteacher