



CE Briefing

SCHOOL YEAR 2020/21
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From what I've observed this weekend on my runs around Maltby, it appears as though Halloween is fast becoming a holiday that has a similar lead-in to Christmas, with a lot of houses all decked up with fake blood and ghoulish paraphernalia. I have to say, it has made me stop and think 'when did that happen'? Hey ho, on with this month's briefing... It's been great to get back in touch with our committed local governing bodies over the past 2 weeks: it's over 6 months since academy governors last met, so it's been a real positive to see familiar faces - and welcome some new ones - as the essential work of school governance starts afresh this year.

The new term has started really well, and the protective measures we have put in place to contain the spread of COVID-19 in our academies have been tested early on. Abbey, Becton & Hilltop have all had confirmed cases which have been successfully contained in school, which is a hugely positive reflection on the effective planning and responsible actions of staff across our schools. We know that it is impossible to prevent any COVID-19 cases from coming into our academies, so it's essential that the measures we have in place to reduce cross-contamination are robust. Our best wishes go to those pupils, families and staff who are on the road to recovery after contracting the virus. The one consistency with COVID-19 seems to be the huge variation in symptoms: some people have very mild symptoms which are recovered from quickly, whilst others have been much more poorly with much longer lasting effects. As the R number continues to rise and we await news on further protective measures across our society, it's essential we all take care and practice the **Hands, Face, Space** mantra in our daily lives.

Average attendance rates across our academies is above the 90% mark, which is higher than I expected and pays testament to the trust our families have in the care our schools offer. One of the biggest issues we've faced this term is the self isolation children and staff must undertake when a household member has COVID-19-like symptoms. This matter has been compounded by the duress the NHS testing system has been under, though this appears to have improved locally over the past few weeks. We have also faced a lot of confusion with the NHS Test & Trace app, which has issued a number of misleading notifications to users. Joanne Hedge, our HR Consultant, has issued a policy briefing last week which includes updated guidance to help staff navigate this confusing landscape. I am also proud to report that we have seen positive uptake of the Nexus MAT Flu immunisation programme, which we have invested in as a Trust to safeguard our workforce from influenza this winter. Please contact Joanna Hedge for more info.

Finally, it is with much sadness that I report the recent death of one of our Heatherwood pupils, Haris Waqar. Haris was originally a pupil at North Ridge, and joined Heatherwood in September 2019. Haris passed away on 3 September 2020, and will be remembered by both school communities and his loving family. Our thoughts and best wishes go out to all those who knew Haris. I am very proud of the happiness we brought into his life- and he to ours - during his time in our schools.

Learning together, to be the best we can be Warren Carratt

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