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Dear Parent or Carer

We are writing to you with our next update for parents and carers across our six trust schools. We had hoped this next letter would follow on from the publication of detailed guidance about the government's plans for schools from September. Unfortunately, we have not received this guidance and do not now expect that guidance to be published until the end of this week. As you may be aware, information appears once again to have been leaked to the media and the interpretation, casual chat and guesswork around it is proving enormously unhelpful to parents, carers and young people. We hope this update will provide some clarification and common sense!

It is very clear that the government wants every school aged child back in school, full time from September. We welcome this, look forward to it and have been working for some time on how we make this happen as safely as possible.

As we think about re-opening fully, our collective mindset is really important. There is so much unhelpful talk around at the moment. High profile school leaders who have recently gone on the record to say children will have "forgotten how to hold a pen" or that they have all stopped doing work and are "watching Netflix or playing video games" are insulting the efforts of so many of our young people who have responded with hard work, good grace and resilience. Other public figures talking of "a lost generation" or a "social catastrophe" are only likely to make young people worry and think things are far worse than they are. We will not engage with such careless, flippant and damaging talk.

The reality is this. A young person's school career is typically 468 school weeks long. Most young people have been out of school for 14 weeks and most of them have been working and producing good quality work. This is just below 3% of their total school career. This is not a situation any of us would have chosen and there is real work to be done to make sure no child is disadvantaged. But it is not something that should be catastrophised or turned into a political battle. The job of everyone working in schools is to remain calm and measured and plan for our students' return, knowing that between us we have the best knowledge and experience of how to teach, support and catch up (where needed) our students. You will not see a 200 point recovery strategy; we will have a simple plan that focuses on what matters and that everyone understands. And then we will crack on!

Our highest priority for additional support is those closest to important external exams – Year 11 and Year 13. Year 13 students will have more teaching time in the normal school day than students have typically had. Year 11 will have access to a broad and extensive range of extra sessions. Year 10 students will have some additional curriculum time in their option subjects without losing time from other subjects and Year 12 students have the opportunity to start an extra subject. Should Year 10 and Year 12 students need additional support before they take their exams in summer 2022, they will receive it.



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We will use any extra funding from the government to provide additional tutoring to those who clearly need it and, as we have told you previously, we will use our own funds to continue to plug digital gaps for those who need it. We will not engage in any of the latest fads or gimmicks that sound appealing but do not have any demonstrable impact on outcomes for young people.

Evidence shows that the biggest factors in the success of a young person at school is the quality of teaching they experience. A global pandemic has not changed this so, our approach remains to give all students as much good teaching as possible, for the entirety of their school careers. From September, we will ensure that we know where every young person is when they come back into school. We will provide additional support for anyone who needs it, whether that is pastoral or academic. We will do it in a planned and sensible way. That support will be based on everything we know about our students, it will integrate with their classwork and homework and will be delivered by experts. We are continuing to develop our remote platforms which will support homework and revision next year and will ensure any student self-isolating through track and trace can work from home. As we have learnt from Leicester this week, there remain real risks of local areas going back into lockdown at times over the next year and our approach will ensure that should this happen in any of our local areas, we are able to minimise the impact on our students.

As we said in our last communication, it is crucial that by mid-July, schools are able to tell parents, students and staff what school will look like in September. When we have received the government's guidance for September we will write to you again with our detailed plans. Please rest assured that there is a huge amount of work going on to make sure we respond effectively to every aspect of the complexities of re-opening schools fully while the Coronavirus remains prevalent.

We will write to you within the next 10 days with detail of what our schools will look like, but rest assured it is our intention, at this point, to have all students back in full-time from the start of term.

Yours faithfully

Jonny Uttley
CEO

Scott Ratheram
Executive Principal



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