



Twynham Learning

Chief Executive Officer: Mr Gareth Morris BA (Hons), PGCE, NPQH, M(Ed)

Chair of Trustees: Mr Douglas Croucher

Friday 18th December 2020

Dear Parents

I would like to thank you for the exceptional support that you have provided to the schools in the Trust through the challenges we have seen in 2020. I have seen the value of communities working together and supporting one another in a time of exceptional need and in the absence of effective government and policy making. We are incredibly proud of the response to supporting some of the initiatives around foodbanks and other local charities who are at the frontline in protecting the increasing number of vulnerable families within our community. As a family of schools, we fully intend to continue to support these charities into the New Year.

As many of you are aware, there has been a confused and uncoordinated approach to education policy from central Government. This week has highlighted the challenges for the education sector who are doing their best for our children and young people whilst trying to navigate the ambiguous and contradictory messaging coming from Westminster.

Following last night's announcement around a delayed start to the academic year and a move to distance learning for some pupils, I thought I should clarify the position of Twynham Learning schools.

Primary Phase Schools

Twynham Primary, Christchurch Junior, Stourfield Infant and Stourfield Junior Schools will return as expected on the date indicated by your respective school (4th/5th January depending on INSET arrangements).

There will be no measurable differences to current expectations around attendance, uniform, curriculum etc. and fortunately there will be limited disruption.

Secondary Phase Schools

There will be a change to arrangements for Secondary age students in line with the Government's statutory expectations:

- The Grange School and Twynham School will continue with the existing INSET day on the 4th January.
- Year 11 and Year 13 will return to school for face-to-face teaching on Tuesday 5th January.
- All other year groups will remain at home and engage in online learning for the first week and will not return to face-to-face teaching until Monday 11th January.
- Those students who are designated as vulnerable or children of critical workers who need emergency provision will be in school within an isolated and limited provision.

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Testing Strategy – Secondary Phase Schools

In light of last night's late announcement about the expectation for all secondary schools to implement COVID-19 testing regimes, we are still in the process of formulating what this will look like. However, initial expectations are as follows:

- Testing is not mandatory, but it is highly recommended so that we can mitigate any risks and continue to minimise disruption to your child's education through 'bubble closures'.
- The testing arrangements will continue on an ongoing basis, until we are informed otherwise by the Department for Education.
- Consent forms for each individual child will be sent and completed electronically.
- Your child's bubble will be contacted in due course for a designated slot where they will need to attend to undertake preliminary COVID-19 testing (possibly during the latter part of the first week of term).

However, I have serious concerns about the Government's expectation for schools to deliver testing (an area significantly outside the expertise of what education establishments would normally deliver) in the absence of any official guidance, resourcing or training. I ask for your patience and support as the plan unfolds and request that you regularly monitor communication from the schools as we embark on a herculean task that is both unreasonable and improbable on the last day of term prior to the Christmas break.

However, I am confident that, despite the massive challenges this last-minute announcement by Government has caused, the amazing team at The Grange School and Twynham School will do their utmost to deliver this. I am grateful for the professionalism and commitment shown by the staff at Twynham Learning schools this year as they have navigated our community through the worst of this crisis with moral courage, dedication and professionalism. I am particularly grateful to the school leaders who have sacrificed significant personal time in keeping your children safe. We look forward to 2021 where we will continue to do our very best for the Twynham Learning family of schools and beyond.

May I wish you a Happy Christmas with your families and a rest from the challenges that we have all faced this year.

Kind regards



Gareth Morris
Chief Executive Officer