

3 December 2021

Dear Parents, Families and Staff,

I start this letter by thanking you all for your on-going support and understanding during what has continued to be a challenging time for everyone in our school communities. I am proud of the hard work and dedication of our staff who have pulled together to ensure that our pupils receive as broad an educational experience as possible. Children in all our schools have positively engaged with their learning and talk with excitement about the experiences they have had, despite the inevitable continued interruptions to school life. It has been lovely to see clubs and extra-curricular activities again in our schools and to welcome back visitors. Children are safe, happy and are making progress and this is in no small part due to the tremendous commitment of staff across the Trust and your support for learning.

Inevitably in some schools we have had to implement measures from the NEST Contingency Plan and work with the London Corona Virus Response Cell to limit the spread of Covid cases. All school leaders are finding the supply of cover staff challenging and every member of staff in our schools are working tirelessly, so face to face teaching and learning can continue. I know that any changes to staff and school plans can be disappointing and add to the complexity of our lives, however any changes and additional restrictions are made following government and health guidance; health and safety requirements; staffing constraints and with the best interests of all in school.

The positive impact of NEST schools' swift action when there is a significant number of cases have, following the implementation of additional mitigation measures successfully seen a subsequent decrease in cases and a movement to fewer restrictions within a short period.

As we move towards the Christmas season all our schools will be considering the celebrations they have planned and how to best to ensure the safety of staff, children and families. We have already asked all our staff to consider wearing face masks in communal areas. Our schools may also consider further measures for any events that they are planning and will be communicating these to you, please do respect any requests and support the school with their mitigation measures. Examples of these measures may include:

- Bubbles, to reduce mixing between groups
- Face coverings for visitors (unless exempt)
- Requesting that visitors undertake a Lateral Flow test
- Limiting the number of visitors
- Extra ventilation

Sadly, in some circumstances events may need to be cancelled. I know that schools will try to avoid this or will approach an event in a different way. A full assessment of the risk, consideration of possible mitigations measures is applied when there is a need to change planned provision and will be done in the best interests of all.

I hope that you are looking forward to the Christmas period in school and that by working together we all can celebrate safely.

Yours faithfully
Paula Farrow
CEO

