



Oliver Burwood

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FAO: All Parents/Carers, DNEAT Academies

15 December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

You may remember I wrote to you earlier in the school year to thank you for all you are doing to get children safely back into school and to signpost sources of medical advice around COVID symptoms.

Attendance - thank you!

Thanks to your ongoing efforts in this area I am extremely pleased to be able to report to you that attendance of pupils has been very good across all academies within DNEAT. When COVID related illness is discounted, attendance of pupils is actually better than it has been in previous years (96.2% compared to pre-COVID Trust average 95.3%), so thank you.

Staffing in academies - your support is appreciated

I wanted to write to you to outline a couple of other issues that may be affecting your academy and to ask for your continued support with these as we move in to 2021. The first is around staffing. Headteachers and academy staff have worked exceptionally hard to ensure safe staffing since September. This has involved at times unavoidable changes and redeployment of staff, where safe to do so, because of much higher than usual staff absence due to COVID.

The two week Christmas break gives Headteachers even greater flexibility as staff in bubbles could be changed, if needed, as there is no risk of cross infection. Headteachers in DNEAT constantly seek to provide stability of staff as we know this helps children. However, in order to ensure safe staffing across a whole school and to keep classrooms open, sometimes the difficult decision to move staff simply has to be made. I am asking for your support and understanding with this if you find that this is the case in your child's class or school after Christmas.

COVID reporting and communication in the holidays

The second issue relates to reporting positive COVID cases to your school during the holidays. Your academy will write to you separately to explain the arrangements for your child, should you need to report a COVID positive case.

There is a chance, albeit small, that an academy will need to contact parents in the earlier part of the holiday to tell them about a positive case from their child's class bubble and advising them to self-isolate. Most schools will send out automated communications if this

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is the case (they will let you know which system they will be using). There will not be a chance, in most cases, to communicate back with the academy, but the instructions to self-isolate should be followed. We all understand how difficult such a communication could make a family Christmas, but we of course do legally have to communicate the information to parents and are not in a position to be able to offer any further advice on how it should be followed.

I would like to end on a positive note. To thank you, once again, for all you are doing to ensure children can be in school and, as Headteachers report to me regularly, for how you have been supporting the academies generally throughout the pandemic. We hope that as vaccinations are rolled out into 2021 we might see a change in all our lives, and I hope this will include in our schools too.

A final thanks for all you are doing to support your child and their academy.
Yours sincerely,

Oliver Burwood
DNEAT Chief Executive Officer