

Swanland Education Trust

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28th January 2021

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Dear Parents and Carers

Mr Chris Huscroft
Chief Executive Officer

Since last writing to you, there have been a couple of announcements made by the government in relation to schools. Previously, I have said that the information we have about these announcements is nothing more than what you, yourselves can find for yourself through the official government channels, this continues to be the case with these latest announcements.

National Statutory Assessments for 2021

The first of the announcements, in relation to our schools, is that of assessment procedures for 2021. You will probably be aware the following statutory assessments are undertaken by children in our schools:

- Reception – Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
- Year 1 – Phonics Screening
- Year 2 – Phonics Screening (re-sit if no-pass in Y1)
- Year 2 – Standard Assessment Test (KS1 SATs)
- Year 4 – Multiplication Check
- Year 6 – Standard Assessment Test (KS2 SATs)

As the curriculum has been interrupted by the most recent national lockdown, the Department for Education (DfE) announced that all statutory assessments for the year 2021 would be cancelled. This means that your children will not undergo any of the formal national testing. It is really important to stress to you that these assessments are largely a measure of how well schools are performing. They can also be a good indication of how well your child is progressing against age related expectations. Obviously, these assessments are based up on the content of the curriculum which would be taught to children whilst they are in school, once again the interruption to education may have had some impact on children's outcomes.

However, we want to reassure you that the schools continue to place significant importance on delivering high quality teaching and learning for your children. As a consequence, they will not be disadvantaged by the cancellation of national testing. In fact, the government have allocated all schools an additional fund to provide specific, bespoke teaching in the form of a COVID-19 Catch Up funding. This will allow teachers the chance to close any gaps that may have occurred during the national lockdowns, or in some cases where schools have had to close bubbles.

Teachers will continue to undertake their routine, day to day, assessments and will make informed decisions about children's achievements against age related expectations; this will be communicated to you at the end of this academic year. This should be of particular reassurance to those families with children in Year 6 who will move on to their secondary education at the end of this academic year.

We will ensure that the information given to their future destination schools will provide accurate results, moderated across all of our schools, again.

Wider opening of our schools after National Lockdown

The second of the important announcements which have been made recently is that of when we will be able to welcome more children back into schools. Yesterday, Boris Johnson made it clear that the expected (and what we had hoped for!) return after February half-term is not possible. He made it clear that the earliest schools could be more widely opened was **Monday 8th March**.

Having listened carefully to his announcement both in Parliament and at his daily briefing, he was very careful in the words he chose to use... I believe, for very good reason he made reference to the fact that they would look to *'begin to reopen schools, from 8th March'*. When exiting the previous lockdown, the government did so slowly and in a considered way; inviting back individual year groups at a time. Whilst I have no more information than yourselves, I feel it might be an approach that is once again used to get more children back into our schools. If this is the case, it will obviously mean that some children may have to remain at home for a little longer. Please be reassured that we will continue to provide the provision that is currently in place to support those children who this may apply to.

I hope that by sharing my thoughts with you, it gives you time to prepare and make arrangements should we find ourselves needing to consider an extension to the current arrangements.

Of course, nothing would make us all happier than to have your children back in our schools as soon as is possible. This, of course, has to be coupled with when it is the correct time, according to the scientific data. We are hopeful that the efforts which you are all going to at the moment will enable that data to support more children coming back to school, sooner rather than later.

As always, thank you for your continuing support, now and into the future.

Yours sincerely



Chris Huscroft

CEO