



To All School Staff

County Hall
Penrhyn Road
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey
KT1 2DN

17th April 2020

Dear Colleague,

We are writing to thank every single one of our colleagues working in the school community in Surrey for the extraordinary efforts we have seen in recent weeks responding to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

As well as school leaders and teachers, we recognise that without the excellent work of Teaching Assistants in all their various roles, caterers, office staff, cleaners, site managers and all other school staff, we would not have been able to support Surrey parents and children as we have.

We also wanted to thank the great many of you that stepped up to volunteer in order to keep schools open over the Easter holidays for children of workers critical to the Covid-19 response and vulnerable children.

We have faced many challenges so far and no doubt there will be more to overcome – not least ensuring that we all continue to keep up with the fast-moving guidance from the Department for Education.

We particularly want to thank all school leaders and staff for responding to our requests for information and keeping us informed of the issues and challenges you are facing. We need

to continue to work together as a Surrey family of schools maintained, academies and independent alike, more than ever at this time.

We have been moved by the many initiatives our schools are putting in place to support parents and children as well as their wider community, staff and other parts of the national response, such as our colleagues in the NHS. Many parents are receiving regular phone calls from some of our school leaders which in the words of one Headteacher “helps us to feel we are supporting one another as humans and not just numbers”.

Many schools across the county are finding ways to use new technology to stay in touch with their pupils – often going outside of their comfort zone to bring a creative approach to this effort. It has been simply awe-inspiring and often emotional to see teachers across the county keeping school communities alive by making videos, sharing songs and stories with their classes via social media and video conferencing technology.

Many of our schools are prioritising the importance of staff wellbeing and again there are many examples where schools have used creative ways to support staff to connect and share. On-line book clubs, pub quizzes and use of Google classroom to create a ‘Google Staffroom’ are examples of how schools are supporting their staff and helping people stay connected to each other and their school community.

Surrey schools have even stepped up to play their role in supporting their wider communities – delivering over 8,000 goggles and disposable gloves to our NHS colleagues in response to the “Goggles for the NHS” appeal. In the words of one of our Headteachers “this is a great example of one part of the nations’ public services giving to another part of our public services in their hour of need – our shared hour of need”.

We also mustn’t forget some of our smaller schools who are working alongside our larger schools to go above and beyond to support children and young people, parents, our critical workers and communities. We applaud you all.

Kind regards



Julie Iles
Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning
Surrey County Councillor, Horsleys



Liz Mills
Director Education
Lifelong Learning and Culture