



Grant Road, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG45 7HZ
01344 772658 | enquiries@corvuslearningtrust.co.uk
www.corvuslearningtrust.co.uk



Corvus Learning Trust COVID-19 Update February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

As we come towards the end of this half-term, it felt a good time to update you once again about what we have been doing with our schools and to show our appreciation for the work that everyone is doing.

Since the Christmas Holidays...

What a challenging first half to the term this has been for all of us following the Government's decision to close schools at short notice (other than for priority children) from 5th January! All our schools have worked hard to ensure that whether children are at school or at home they are receiving, as near as possible, the same provision. Our schools have therefore developed and improved on their educational offers that were available during the first lockdown, to fulfil this objective. We are pleased to hear that so many of our children are engaging with their learning, teachers and schools in a variety of different ways such as live teaching, video, 1:1s, storytelling, assemblies, group work and question & answer sessions as well as physical and outdoor based activities. Our schools are also continuing to develop age-appropriate provision that recognises children's differing needs. We are aware that this improvement of the home learning provision can put an increased burden on our parents and IT equipment as many of us work from home. We have been delighted with the amount of IT equipment that has been donated to our schools and that we have been able to support our school families.

As a Trust, our Primary improvement team have been supporting our schools in developing their educational offers which has included, for example, the provision of Maths and reading videos to aid children, staff and parents.

It is also important to recognise the transition our teaching staff have had to undertake in order to adapt to some new ways of teaching - from teaching in front of children, to now including teaching to a video camera and to blank screens. This requires new and different skills!

Parent Feedback

We have been delighted to hear about the positive feedback from parents/carers that many of our schools have received on their new educational offers. As a parent community you have been so supportive, and we would like to say a huge thank you for playing your part in helping us to deliver your child's education.

Our COVID Team

During the Christmas holidays we pulled together a "COVID-19 Team" consisting of the CEO, Headteachers, Chairs of Governors, our Primary Improvement Team and Trustees. This team has held weekly (now fortnightly) meetings in order to support each school, share good practice and to ensure frequent communication.

Staff and student Testing

As we returned to school in January, Edgbarrow School had received their testing equipment and after much hard work and commitment from staff over the last weekend of the holidays, they were ready to carry out testing at the start of term. Testing for the staff (and some students) of Edgbarrow School began on Monday 4th January and has been continuing ever since. We have been delighted that, as a Trust, we have been able to offer all Trust staff the opportunity for testing if they so wished. This helped to reassure staff who had some concerns. Thankfully, the Primary/Infant/Junior schools now have their own kits and are testing twice weekly.

Presently, we have 3 members of staff who are recovering from COVID and we would like to take this opportunity to wish them a speedy recovery.

Risk Assessment

We can confirm that all our schools have up-to-date Risk Assessment Plans for the safe use of our sites and have received visits from the Bracknell Forest Health and Safety Adviser, who has confirmed that our sites are safe. Please rest assured that we take the safety of our children and staff who use our school sites very seriously.

School Finances

It is our experience that this pandemic is having a detrimental effect on school budgets as additional equipment, cleaning and staff costs have been incurred together with a significant reduction in lettings. Although the Government has made available some COVID-19 grant opportunities, there is no doubt that each of our schools' budgets have been detrimentally affected by this pandemic.

However, we are truly fortunate to have received a grant from Wellington College and our schools and pupils will continue to benefit from this support.

Return to School?

There is no doubt that all our schools and headteachers would like to get all children back in school as soon as it is safe to do so, and are fully aware of the impact that this pandemic is having on all of us. In terms of the plans for the re-opening of schools, this is the latest update from the Government:

*"In the week commencing 22 February, the Government will publish a plan for taking the country out of lockdown. Our aim will be to set out a gradual and phased approach towards easing restrictions in a sustainable way, guided by the principles we have observed throughout the pandemic, beginning with the most important principle of all: that re-opening schools must be our National priority. We have committed to providing schools, parents and young people with a minimum of two weeks' notice for this return to on-site provision. Additional pupils and students will therefore return to on-site education on 8 March 2021 **at the earliest.**"*

Your school will obviously keep you updated as they know more.

Thank you!

We are so grateful to everyone for their hard work in delivering our children's education during this pandemic. Our vision remains to "deliver an exceptional education to all our young people", whether this is at home or at school. All staff, children, parents/carers, Governors and Trustees have played an enormous part in making this happen and we are appreciative of every effort: so, thank you.

We welcome feedback on our Trust, so please do contact us at enquiries@corvuslearningtrust.co.uk if you have any suggestions or thoughts.

Please stay safe.

Warmest regards

Bob Elsey
CEO

