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TO ALL FAMILIES ACROSS THE LEARN TO LIVE FEDERATION

Dear Parents & Carers,

As your new Executive Head, I am really excited to welcome you to the start of the new Academic Year. I hope you and your families had a restful summer holiday enjoying time together prior to the start of term this Monday.

For those of you whose paths I haven't crossed yet, my name is Nikki Burroughs and I have worked across the Federation for many years, most recently being Head of School at Ellen Tinkham. I have been fortunate enough to have had opportunities to teach at both Bidwell Brook and Ellen Tinkham Schools, and am really very proud to be a part of our Federation. I am really looking forward to continuing to work with you all in my new capacity as Executive Head.

We have a number of new students and families joining the Federation this year and I would like to extend a very warm welcome to you. As a Federation, we wholeheartedly believe that parents and carers are essential partners in children's learning. Together we can achieve more when we work together co-operatively in a respectful partnership. I really hope you enjoy being part of our school communities.

It is really important to me that all our children and young people as well as staff are kept as safe as possible. I wrote to families at the end of last term to share how we intend the new Academic Year to start and to inform you of the Covid-19 precautions in place. We have been monitoring the increase of Covid-19 infections closely over the summer and as I am sure you are aware, cases in Devon and the South West remain high. These high infection rates across the South West have led to Devon, Plymouth, Torbay and Cornwall being moved to an Enhanced Response Area by central Government. This will be in place for 5 weeks initially but will be reviewed after 4 weeks.

As a Federation, we are working hard to ensure we minimise the risk of infection. We want to keep our community as safe as we possibly can whilst still continuing to provide a great education. Our full risk assessment remains a live document that is being reviewed regularly. Whilst many measures have been removed following the guidance from the Department for Education, some still remain in place across the Federation.

Face coverings - In a letter to all schools in Devon, Steve Brown, the Director of Public Health Devon, outlined the fact that we are in an Enhanced Response Area and made it clear that he would like all staff and students to return to wearing face coverings in communal areas. Given the current high infection rates, we think this is sensible and therefore expect staff to continue to wear face coverings in communal areas, including corridors and around our sites. Students may wear masks if they wish.

Lateral Flow Testing - Staff across the Federation will continue to test twice a week so that asymptomatic cases can be picked up really quickly and prevent infections spreading.

If your child displays any of the symptoms of Covid-19, please do not send your child into school. You must arrange for a PCR test and advise the school of the outcome.

Isolation - Students under the age of 18 years and 6 months are not required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of, or live with, someone who has tested positive, unless:

- They have been instructed to do so by NHS Test & Trace 2;
- They are showing Covid-19 symptoms.

As you will be aware over the last year, schools have undertaken all the tracing of close contacts in school to inform families that their child/young person needed to go into self-isolation. Under the current guidance, this responsibility now falls on NHS Track & Trace.

Please report an absence due to Covid-19 as you would any other absence.

Hand Sanitising - We will be asking staff and pupils to continue sanitising their hands on a regular basis, particularly before and after eating or visiting the toilet. We have plenty of hand washing facilities and hand sanitisation units across our sites, and I know many students bring their own little bottles of sanitiser into school which is great to see.

Ventilation - We will continue to keep doors and windows open in classrooms to ensure good ventilation.

We will continue to carry out enhanced cleaning of commonly touched surfaces such as door handles and equipment during the day and will continue to “fog” our schools regularly.

I hope you find these measures reassuring. It is really important to me that all our children and young people, as well as staff, are kept as safe as possible. Maintaining these measures will give us time to assess the situation and enable us to monitor the situation moving forward. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

I am really looking forward to seeing all the children and young people back in school safe and well next week and to working closely with you as families to ensure best outcomes for all.

Have a great weekend.



Nikki Burroughs - Executive Head

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