

The Compass Partnership of Schools

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Trust Leader of The Compass Partnership:

John Camp



Tuesday 20th October 2020

Dear parents and carers,

I hope this letter finds you well. I cannot quite believe we have been back for nearly half a term already. In many respects the time seems to have flown by, but it also feels like we have been living the new normal for some length of time now!

Thank you all for the tremendous support you have shown since all children returned to school at the beginning of this term. Attendance is good across our schools even though test, track and trace continues to require many children to stay at home whilst awaiting test results. One of the most challenging parts of the full return to schooling has been the beginning and end of day when parents arrive to drop off or pick up their children. We have staggered these times to ensure parents are able to socially distance but with so many parents gathering outside of the school gate it is really important that everyone observes the 2-metre distancing rule. If parents wish to wear a face covering as well during this period, they are most welcome to, but we are unable to enforce this outside of the school premises.

Children have been happy and engaged since the first day of school and are making good progress in class. We can see that parents had a real impact at home, keeping children on track and helping them with their remote learning. We are confident that children will make good progress towards age-related expectations this year.

Over the next week we will be reviewing the systems and procedures we have put in place as part of our COVID-19 safe planning. This includes the early finish on one day a week which has enabled us to reduce the movement of adults between bubbles, reducing closures overall as we know this has a huge impact on families. Where we have had to close bubbles we have followed government guidance and our risk assessments, which have worked well in these circumstances. Our risk assessments and COVID-19 procedures are kept under continual review. As you know, we have redistributed the weekly teaching by cutting down on the length of break times during the school day so that we can maintain the same amount of teaching time as children had previously. Online learning has been in place since March and is available to children self-isolating at home. Our electronic platforms also continue to enable interaction with the teacher. **If you have any feedback regarding any of the COVID-19 systems and procedures, including the early close on one day a week, then please email me via the address at the top of this letter and I will ensure we include your feedback in the review process.** It is important that we hear from as many of you as possible as we want to ensure we are meeting needs where we possibly can.

It is also 3 years since we became a Trust of schools and we have been thinking about the progress we have made since we took that decision in 2017. Our ability to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and to develop an online offer with reasonable speed was definitely made possible by the fact we are a close group of schools. Our leaders and teachers have worked

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incredibly closely across our schools since March to plan the curriculum, develop robust risk assessments, find ways of opening to as many children as possible and to also support our families. Trustees and Governors have continued to meet virtually to ensure that our schools receive their ongoing support and challenge through this period. We have been able to work closely with our Compass Parent Forum to ensure our offer met need and that our systems and procedures were effective. The feedback and questioning from the Parent Forum has been invaluable and we are looking to expand the membership of this group, and to find ways of engaging a wider a range of parental views prior to our meetings through focused questionnaires on key subjects. Please keep an eye out for more information after half term as we would really like to welcome some more Parent Forum members to the group.

This term we have started with a new school meal provider, as our previous provider is discontinuing its services early next year. Chartwells, successfully tendered to our Trust and was selected by the tender committee. We are incredibly excited that we can offer your children a rich and diverse daily menu using high quality ingredients and designed to encourage children to eat healthily and enjoy good food. Please encourage your child/ren to take up a school meal as we aim to decrease the price of a school meal as more children take them up. Chartwells are also offering special isolation packages for those children who are isolating due to COVID-19 and are entitled to Free School Meals – please see the accompanying leaflet for more details. If you have any questions at all about the new school meals, please contact us.

We know that we are going to be operating in these unusual times for another two terms at least. We are working incredibly hard to ensure children learn well across the curriculum and to maintain systems and procedures that keep our schools open for everyone. Your feedback is crucial in this effort so please contact me with any questions or ideas that you feel we should consider – we want to ensure we are getting things right.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Compass Team for being a superb community to be part of. Regardless of the challenge, children and adults alike have embraced the opportunities that each new day presents and focused on getting on with the fabulous learning that is evident across our schools.

Best wishes to you all.

John Camp
Trust Leader