

A YEAR TO FORGET, HAVE UNDERSTANDING AND LEARN FROM

In our schools we are not talking about when things will return to normal but rather what the new normal will look like for schools. Schools, along with every single aspect of society, have experienced over a year of difference that could never have been imagined 2 years ago. The pandemic has been a challenging period for teachers, schools, pupils and parents. While adjusting to the new way of living during the pandemic, many teachers, parents and pupils took on additional responsibilities that went above and beyond their usual roles and duties, and they should be recognised for their efforts. Whilst we did our best, it cannot be denied that the quality and quantity of learning pupils undertook declined as a result of the pandemic. As a result there has been lost learning and gaps in the pupils' education. We were given insights into households that have allowed us think about our communities differently and as a result adapt our curriculum.



We do not want to repeat many aspects of the past 18 months but there will be some things the schools will maintain and keep in place. As society 'unlocks' nationally over the summer holidays, we have to take into account our local context and therefore, come September, there will still be some measures in place to make sure the schools are Covid-secure environments. The Headteachers, in their communications with you, will outline the specific measures relevant to each school for the return of pupils in September. Each school will revise their risk assessment and this will reflect the local context. Each school is also required to produce an 'outbreak management plan' which outlines the key actions and measures that will be implemented should there be an outbreak of Covid-19 in the school.

Throughout the pandemic everything has been different and therefore we have to understand why certain things might have happened. At times there have been frustrations, and even anger, between parents and the schools—your lives have been disrupted. Pupil behavior will have slipped from lack of structure and routine—imagine being cooped up in a version of a pen during your free time! Complaints have been made when you have not been happy—hopefully addressed satisfactorily. Our experience this past 18 months has been so different, everything did not run as smoothly as usual; we understand the reasons for this and trust things are going to get better.



So a huge thanks for all your kind words and appreciation over the year. I do hope we have been understanding when you have needed us and you have recognized when things have not been perfect.



GROWTH OF THE FEDERATION

After a consultation period, and a few weeks deliberation, the Governing Board of Calverton Primary School (in Custom House) and the Federation Board met last week and formally agreed to proceed to Federate. In the Autumn Term, our Federation becomes three schools. As mentioned in the last newsletter, there should be little change to the running of either school but the senior staff will be used at times to support school improvement across the whole Federation.

We now need to dissolve the Governing Boards in each school and elect parents (x2) and a staff (x1) Governors to join the new Federation Board. At the start of next term, please look out for the nomination forms to put yourself forward. Being a Governor requires a high commitment with a number of meetings each term. A reminder as well that no matter which school you are elected from you are on the Board to represent all schools in the Federation. We also would like to make sure that you have the right skills to compliment the rest of the Board; key skills we have found it challenging to recruit to before is data analysis, building and construction, marketing and media and health and safety. We would warmly welcome any parents that could bring any one of these skills to our Governing Board.

If you would like to focus on the school your child attends / you work in then we anticipate as the year progresses we will introduce a local governance committee so you may want to wait until that point to put your name forward.



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

From September 2021, schools are expected to review their practice in line with The Engagement Model. The Engagement Model is an assessment tool that helps schools meet their duties in supporting pupils who are working below the level of the national curriculum and who are not engaged in subject-specific study. Engagement can help schools reflect on how well the bespoke curriculum they offer to their pupils is helping them progress.

We have already spent months preparing new programmes of work for our SEND pupils with a mix of specialist SEND provision, in and out of class learning and we are very excited about providing a bespoke curriculum for our most vulnerable pupils. The SENDCos for each school will keep you updated with changes for individual children and the staffing arrangements. We have always had the goal of developing appropriate independence for children with special needs and the enhanced focus on progress of learning will help us achieve this.



Learning Knows No Bounds

MOVING ON

It has come to the time when we say some goodbyes as we finish the school year.



Firstly, the Year 6 children move on to their secondary schools. They have had a turbulent 18 months and did not get the opportunity to demonstrate how well they have done at primary school with the usual SATs but they have done very well and are a credit to each school. We wish them all the best as they transfer to Year 7, and ask they keep in touch with us—especially if they achieve great things! Good luck.

It is also a time when staff move on to new pastures and experiences. We have been very lucky at Central Park to have no permanent members of staff leaving. At Dersingham there are a number of staff leaving. We wish them all the very best for the future and thank them for what they have done over the time they have been at each school. Each Headteacher will provide the relevant details in their own newsletters.

FRIDAY AFTERNOONS

Back in September we introduced blended learning by providing home learning on Friday afternoons and closing the school earlier. This was mainly as a safe measure to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school. Whilst there are many families who made a success of this arrangement a large number of children did not complete their learning. The arrangement also brought some benefits to in school organisation.



Reviewing the situation, from September 2021, Governors have agreed to continue with a similar arrangement. There will still be a slightly earlier finish than on the other days but children will remain in school longer on Friday afternoon. Once they are dismissed there is no requirement for home learning—although of course we would encourage them to still read at home, learn their times-tables, complete research projects, homework, etc. We appreciate all the support you have given this year and trust you will do so next year. Provision will continue to the normal school day end for children of working parents, who find it challenging to collect their child early or those deemed vulnerable.

Again, Headteachers will give details of the organisation for each school.

BACK TO SCHOOL

Here I repeat the message I gave in my last newsletter, our stance on term-time leave is we do not allow it! You have to be extra cautious if you are deciding to go abroad over the summer, positions can change and you can quite easily become stranded. Children have missed enough face to face teaching, they do not need to miss anymore. So please make sure your plans are flexible enough to include any requirement to quarantine, that can be imposed last minute, upon your return so children are ready to start back to school on **Thursday 2 September**. This means being prepared to return to the UK around the 20th Aug. This is the same message we give our staff also. We expect them to plan so they are ready to be in school on Wednesday 1st September.



SUMMER HOLIDAYS

As we break for summer the sun seems to be shining. I do hope you all get to have an enjoyable summer. Look out for events and activities that Newham Council are putting on over the summer. We look forward to welcoming you back next year to the next normal—what ever that looks like.

Darren Williams, Executive Headteacher

