Parents and Carers of
Children and Young People

Surrey County Council
County Hall
Penrhyn Road
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey KT1 2DN

Dear Parents and Carers

We wanted to take the opportunity to write to you again following the implementation of the national lockdown on 5 November 2020. You will be aware from government announcements that all schools and education settings are required to remain open to all children and young people during this time, with the expectation that all children should attend school, unless they are unwell or required to stay at home in accordance with NHS Test & Trace.

We acknowledge for some families, this may feel a big ask, given the wider message to stay home, but we've seen for ourselves how rigorously our school leaders have followed the national guidance to make their schools COVID safe. 'Bubbles', 'one-way systems', 'staggered starts/drop offs', 'sanitiser points', 'touch-point cleaning' are now all part of the everyday language in our schools. School leaders, with the support of the Local Authority, Public Health England and the DfE are revisiting their risk assessments very regularly, to ensure the right measures can be implemented to address any presenting risk or anxiety. As a consequence of this hard work and dedication to detail, we feel assured that our schools are as safe as they can be in the context of these challenging circumstances.

Despite all of these measures, it nevertheless may be that, on occasion (for example your child's bubble needs to close or your child is a contact with a positive case) your child may have to access their school's remote learning offer. On these occasions we are mindful of the challenge this may present to parents and are grateful for the support you offer both your child and their school in enabling them to access it. Schools have become very adept at delivering a remote learning offer, when it is necessary to do so, however, we all recognise that even the most sophisticated of remote offers, doesn't fully compare with the richness of learning opportunities and experiences that take place for children in the school environment. We are committed to supporting children access this face to face interaction in school with their peers and teaching staff as we know it to be the most effective and enjoyable pathway to achieving the best learning outcomes.

We would like to thank you for continuing to be patient, supportive and compassionate with our school leaders and teaching staff during these challenging and difficult times. We acknowledge the particular challenge you may have in enabling our older children to adhere to the lockdown measures, and are extremely grateful for your support in this.

Finally, we thank you for following the instructions from schools when you are informed that your child is required to self-isolate in accordance with national Test and Trace regulations. We know what an upheaval and inconvenience this news can present for family life and are very grateful for your shared commitment in taking appropriate action to reduce the spread of the virus.

We are extremely proud of the way everyone is pulling together to address the challenge COVID 19 is presenting us in so many ways. It's imperative that we continue to do so and follow the national guidance in the weeks ahead to enable us to return to normal as soon as possible.

We recognise that some families are finding these times extremely challenging and we pledge to support you in any way we can. If you are struggling, please contact your school or the https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/emergency-planning-and-community-safety/coronavirus or our community helpline 0300 200 1008 for advice or assistance.

We wish you and your family well and hope that you continue to stay safe.

Councillor Julie Iles,
Cabinet Member



Liz Mills,
Director of Education,
Lifelong Learning and Culture
Surrey County Council

