

Dear Parents and Carers of all Oak Trees Multi Academy Trust Schools,

As we move towards half-term, I thought it would be timely to write to all our families for an update on a few issues.

As you will have seen in the media, the Government have made a number of recent announcements in terms of education moving forward. Among the announcements are:

1. The Government hope that schools will open to all pupils from Monday 8th March. This is currently the hope, rather than a set policy, and we will write to you as soon as we have further information, which should hopefully be around mid-February.
2. The Government have also announced that there will be no SATS or other forms of statutory testing this year due to the pandemic. Schools will continue to assess pupils, but this will be based on teacher judgements and internal assessment rather than any external accountability measures. The children will have gaps in learning through being away from school over the past 12 months, so our assessments will help us identify what these gaps are and how we can address them.
3. Our staff are currently being tested for Covid-19 twice a week in order to reduce transmission of the virus. Whilst this may cause some issues in terms of staff and children having to isolate, it is Government policy that all schools must carry these tests out, and I am hopeful that this will give greater confidence to staff and families moving forward.

Since the announcement of the continuation of schools being closed to key worker and vulnerable children we have seen a rise in the number of eligible parents asking for places for their children in school. Whilst we do understand that home schooling can be challenging for working parents, I would like to remind all parents and carers that the Government policy is that children should be at home if they can be. Our parents have been amazing in their support, and we are so appreciative of this, but we would ask that you continue do everything you can to keep your children at home to reduce the possibility of transmission and reduce the risk to staff and our families.

I met with a number of teachers last week to discuss their workload and wellbeing, and I was blown away by their dedication and support for our children. They were also very positive about the engagement from parents for home learning, and felt that the children were generally being well supported in school and at home. I also met with a number of parents, who again were positive of the schools and the support being given. Out of these meetings a couple of suggestions were made which I thought would be worth sharing:

1. Introduce optional non-screen time for children at home and in school to focus more on wellbeing and getting children outside in the fresh air rather than staying inside all day in order to support their mental health and physical activity. Our teachers are worried about the children being inside and on screens too much, so we would ask parents and carers to support us in this.
2. Agree that staff should only be responding to emails from parents during the school day and not in the evening or weekends. Whilst some parents may need to email schools out of school hours due to work commitments, I would not expect teachers to respond out of school hours simply because they need a break, and we will look to continue with this policy for the next few weeks until schools re-open.

let's school

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Our schools

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Poulton Lancelyn Primary School
Brackenwood Junior School
Egremont Primary School
Stanton Road Primary School
Church Drive Primary School



I, like you, am desperate for all our children to return to school on 8th March, and I am hopeful that this will be the case if the number of Covid cases continues to fall. Being away from schools and their friends is not good for children's academic progress nor for their physical and

mental well-being, and hopefully I will be able to write to you with good news in the next few weeks about schools returning in March.

Thank you for your continued support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Lacey', located below the 'Thank you' text.

Tony Lacey CEO Oak Trees MAT