

8 July 2021

Dear parents and carers

It has been another extraordinary year that has challenged us all in some many ways. Yet again our staff, students and families have shown great resilience and responded to the circumstances with patience, understanding and humour. Thank you to both you and your children for all that you have done to support your school this year.

We all know just how much our staff and students have missed out over the last two academic years; concerts, shows, trips, visits, assemblies, proms and so many other things that give breadth, meaning and joy to the experience of education have been greatly missed. These are at the heart of a broad and balanced education that we value within CST. Staff and students have all missed these opportunities and there is no doubt that we are much less likely to take such occasions for granted going forward. In many ways this appreciation of shared activities has also brought our communities even closer together and we all hope that September will bring better times.

The government announced this week a number of key changes to the current coronavirus guidance for schools. After the end of the summer term it will no longer be necessary to keep children in consistent groups (bubbles) and from 19th July schools will no longer need to do contact tracing (this will be carried out by NHS Test and Trace). In addition, from 16 August 2021, children under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive Covid-19 case. This will be a significant step forward for schools and help to limit disruption to education as well as the considerable burden on senior leadership teams to undertake contact tracing. It is clear that we are going to have to live with Covid for a long time to come but my sincere hope is that the academic year 2021-22 will have no interruptions and will be rich in the wider opportunities that make us feel alive and hopeful.

Both our GCSE and A level students have not been able to take their examinations this year and our teachers have had to take on the burden of additional marking and assessment tasks all of which are subject to the moderation exercises before results days can go ahead on the 10th and 12th August. My thanks go to all our teachers and leaders who have essentially taken on the additional tasks normally done by the examination boards. My thanks also to you as parents and carers for the support you have shown to teachers and students. Lastly, a big well

done to all the students who have managed to complete all the assessments and have managed to stay positive during what has been an extraordinary time. Good luck on results day!

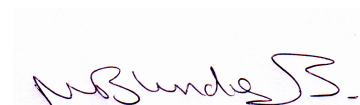
Some students will leave our schools in year 6, others in year 11 and of course in year 13. We are sad that the usual proms, events and leavers assemblies which are something of a rite of passage have not all been able to go ahead this year but hope that you remember your time with us with affection. We are also of course saying goodbye to many teachers who are moving on across our schools. Not least so to Mr Atkins who retires as Headteacher of Bristol Cathedral Choir School after 29 years. Paul arrived at the school as a newly qualified Science teacher in 1992 and has held a number of roles, in particular, playing a significant part on the founding leadership team when the school became an academy and as Headteacher for the last five years. Most importantly he has been a much loved and brilliant teacher during all that time.

We are of course looking forward to welcoming a new cohort of children, nearly 800 new starters and 86 new staff in September. That is a lot of induction. As well as new staff to the organisation, we are welcoming two new schools to the family; Hotwells Primary School joined us on the 1st July this year and St Werburghs Primary School will join on the 1st August. A warm welcome to staff, children and parents of those two schools.

The permanent building for our new secondary school Trinity Academy is due for completion during August and all the students and staff are excited to finally have an amazing new school to be in. I am sure that staff and children at Stoke Park Primary School are also delighted to get some of their classrooms back! My thanks to them for being so accommodating over the past two years.

Finally a big thank you to the group of amazing volunteers who support our schools in so many ways including our PTAs, local governing bodies, trustees and members. They are so vital to all that we do and achieve together.

I do hope that you all manage something of a holiday this summer albeit local! We look forward to welcoming everyone in our communities back in September.



Neil Blundell  
Executive Principal, Cathedral Schools Trust