

19th July 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

I hope that you and those around you remain well. As we reach the traditional summer holiday break at the end of the most extraordinary academic year in living memory, I wanted to write to you to update you on the most recent government announcements relating to Step 4 of the roadmap and also share with you some information I would ordinarily share to help your preparation for the next academic year:

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Looking back at this year

The year has, of course, been dominated by the coronavirus. It is a tiny thing, $\approx 0.1\mu\text{m}$ in diameter, yet it has led to more than 5m cases and 128,000 deaths in England, according to government figures. It's worth remembering: this is not normal. This is not how we are used to living, not the conditions with which we want to educate our young people and we hope that it will change.

Too often during the year it has been frustrating to hear the media catastrophising about how young people have missed, as a result of lock downs and enforced isolations, long periods of face to face schooling and as a result are behind and need to 'catch up'. It's easy to characterise the year gone by in terms of all the things that we've missed out on. There is no doubt, it has been a hard year.

But I don't want to focus on what we've missed out on. What I want to do is to be grateful for the fact that we are here. We are together at the end of this really difficult year with a lot to be grateful for, even though we have been hit hard by positive cases in the penultimate fortnight of term. If we start with where we are as a country, we can see that many, many fewer people are now dying as a result of COVID-19 even though infection rates are again on the rise. We should be grateful to the amazing National Health Service for the vaccination programme they have rolled out, as well as the incredible care they have offered us during this pandemic.

As a school we are grateful that, thanks to the efforts and focus of our students during lockdown and beyond, we are seeing that the vast majority have remained on track with learning throughout this year. In other words, our students are not a million miles away from where we would expect them to be if they hadn't spent several months learning through a screen. We are, of course, going to continue focussing support on those that most need help but for many the focus on our return will be 'keep up' rather than 'catch up'.

Updated School Operating Guidance Changes for Step 4 of the Covid Roadmap and returning to school in September and the academic year 2021-22

The government has recently published updated guidance for schools in line with Step 4 of the roadmap out of lockdown. This guidance will apply to all schools from September 2021 and can be found [here](#).

Many of the restrictions we have become used to this year have been removed, but some precautions still remain in place. Our guiding principle in designing our processes for 2021-22 is to return to as close to "normal" as possible. We are retaining a number of sensible safety precautions where they enhance our provision, but our aim is to enable as much of our normal practice to resume. It is worth noting that measures could be re-introduced in the event of local outbreaks or changes in circumstances of the virus. However, it is a great reassurance from an 'educational' perspective and we really look forward to getting back to 'normal' from September. Below are the arrangements we will have in place next year, and in particular the arrangements for the return to school in September 2021.

Control measures in school

- **Face coverings:** face coverings will no longer be advised for pupils, staff and visitors at any time in school. As a result of the anxieties relating to the ongoing pandemic, although we will move in line with the DfE's mask wearing guidance whereby they are no longer recommended, we will continue to support staff and students who make the personal choice to continue wearing them. The rules for face coverings on home to school dedicated transport remain unchanged and passengers will still need to wear a face covering whilst on board.
- **Hygiene:** we will continue to provide hand sanitiser dispensers in every classroom, and encourage students to follow the "catch it, bin it, kill it" approach if they cough or sneeze.
- **Cleaning:** we will be continuing with an enhanced cleaning programme, including regular cleaning of touch points including door handles and light switches through the day. This is good for the general health of the school, reducing the spread of many infections, not just COVID-19.
- **Ventilation:** we will be continuing to ventilate all our buildings to their full capacity to improve fresh air flow. We will continue to have doors and windows open as much as possible. We will continue with our revised uniform policy, allowing students to keep their coats on in lessons due to the increased ventilation in classrooms.

Bubbles, Zones and Mixing

At Step 4 it is no longer recommended that it is necessary to keep children in consistent groups ('bubbles'). This means that bubbles will not need to be used and we will now prepare and timetable for a 'pre-covid normal timetable' with staff based in their specialist teaching rooms and students circulating the site/going to their timetabled lesson with their teacher in their designated rooms.

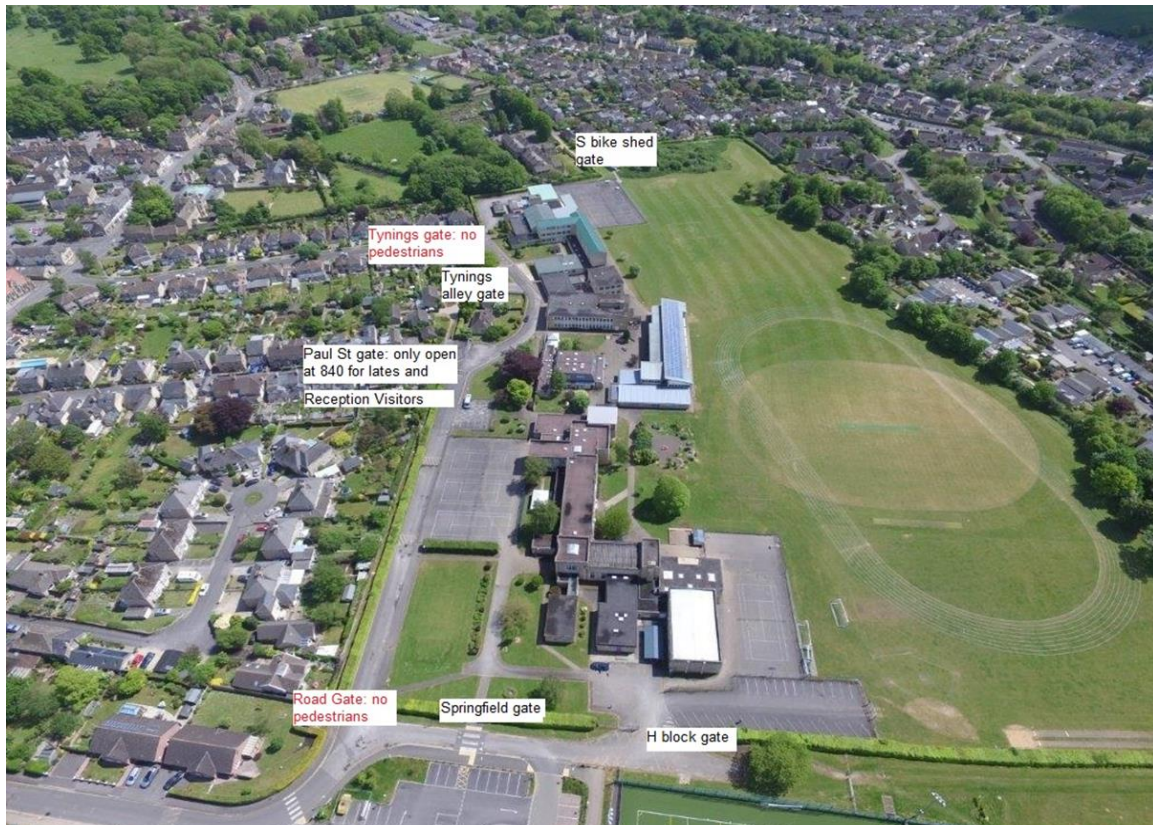
We will however continue with one way systems in corridors, designated entry gates supervised by senior members of staff, separate year group designated social areas on the field and for wet weather rooms indoors at break/lunchtime, with separate food serveries accessible for all year groups, to reduce overcrowding and ensure effective supervision and management of large numbers of students at social times. Details of these social areas have already been provided to current students in their assembly on Friday and all students will be reminded in September as part of their start of year induction activities.

Schools are, however, still required to maintain an "outbreak management plan" to reintroduce more restrictive measures in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19. This means we might have to revert back to bubbles/zones as part of extra control measures, if directed by Public Health/the DfE.

Journey's to School and Gates of Entry

We recommend that wherever possible, children should walk or cycle to school. It is better for their health and it is a more sustainable way of organising one's daily routine: our website has good advice concerning walking and cycling in safety (follow the link). [Journey to School](#)

As we have greatly valued greeting pupils at gates each morning upon their arrival and we still need to ensure that youngsters sanitise their hands as they enter the school site as part of our hygiene control measures we are going to continue with supervised gates at certain entry points of the school each morning, however, these will not be year group specific. To encourage walking and cycling, students may use any of the 4 gates highlighted in the picture below (H block, Tynings alleyway, Springfield crossing and S block bike shed), whichever is most convenient.



The Paul St gate is reserved for latecomers or reception visitors only. To assist with appropriate safeguarding and security, most perimeter gates will be locked during the school day, with the exception of Paul Street. Students must not use the vehicle gates on the school road at the Tynings and close to The Springfield Centre.

If you bring your child(ren) to school by car, we would respectfully ask that you follow best advice in terms of where to drop off and pick up. The Springfield car park is still the safest and best place for drop off by car. It is designed for this purpose and facilitates pedestrian access to school. Even though some parents will be tempted to drive into Paul Street or The Tynings, this must not happen as these 2 roads are really not suited for school drop off and doing so causes significant risk to all and inconvenience to those local residents.

Cases of Covid 19 in School

As is currently the case, anyone showing any of the symptoms of COVID-19 (however mild) should not attend school. They should self-isolate, and book a PCR test as soon as possible. Any student displaying any of the symptoms of COVID-19 in school will be sent home to self-isolate, book a PCR test and follow Public Health advice.

The common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)

- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Please remember that lateral flow tests are not designed for people with symptoms. If you or your child have symptoms, you must isolate and book a PCR test.

Contact Tracing and Isolation Changes

Under the existing guidance, schools identify close contacts of any confirmed cases of COVID-19 and send them home to self-isolate for ten days. The system of the school being responsible for identifying contacts will be scrapped from the end of this term. From Wednesday 21st July, NHS Test and Trace will take over the full responsibility for contact tracing of positive cases. This means that we will no longer send home close contacts of confirmed cases, unless instructed to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

The rules about close contacts having to isolate for 10 days also change on **August 16th – they don't change today as a result of Step 4 of the roadmap**. If a student (or a double vaccinated adult) is identified as a contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 from August 16th, they will need to take a PCR test at a local testing centre as soon as possible. They will only need to continue self-isolation if that test is positive. On receipt of a negative PCR test result, students (and double vaccinated staff) can return to school even if they are identified as a close contact of a confirmed case. We will continue to provide remote education to any student required to self-isolate with a positive test for COVID-19. Contact isolations are likely to be short, as PCR test results are usually returned with 24 hours, so we expect the disruption caused by these isolations to be minimal to students next term.

LFD Home and On-Site Testing

Home testing: Home testing will “pause” over the summer holiday. Students will not be required to complete their twice-weekly home tests, or to report the results to the NHS or the School. Home testing will resume for the month of September 2021 and students will be provided new test kits on their return. The programme will be reviewed by the government at the end of September, and we will provide a further update then.

On-site testing: At the start of term in September, before students are allowed to return to school, all students with consent to do so will be required to take two on-site lateral flow tests in the same way as took place on their return to school in March. We will use existing consents to provide testing to students. If you wish to change your consent status – either if you previously consented to testing and now wish to withdraw your consent, or if you previously did not provide consent and now wish to do so – please contact abrand@corsham.wilts.sch.uk to advise.

If your child joined the school after March 2021 or is joining us in Year 7 in September you should have already received an email relating to the tests and asking for your consent. I am grateful to the all of the New parents who have already completed the consent form. If you haven't yet completed it could you please do so as a matter of urgency, using the link below, to enable us to assist your child's smooth transition back into school with us in September.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=lkgtroUnF0KgrlcqzzWX-ca85SzcjeNlot-P8gPW9npUM0hSMk4yQTA1SEZYOVhSRjRXOTdLNUc3UC4u>

Start of Term Arrangements and Staggered Return for Students in September 2021

Because of the introduction of the on-site testing programme on students' return, we need to stagger the start of term for different year groups in order to accommodate all our students through the test centre. All students have their first September lateral flow test in school and will then return home. If their LFD result returns as negative they will be able to start school the next school day. The table below indicates when school starts for each year group. The second LFD test takes place during the normal school day where pupils come out of class, do a test, then return to learning.

	Weds Sep 1	Thurs 2	Fri 3	Mon 6	Tues 7	Weds 8	Thurs 9	Fri 10
y7	TDD	TDD	1st covid test then home	in school as normal	in school as normal	2nd test in school day	in school as normal	in school as normal
y8	TDD	TDD			1st covid test then home	in school as normal	in school as normal	2nd test in school day
y9	TDD	TDD			1st covid test then home	in school as normal	in school as normal	2nd test in school day
y10	TDD	TDD		1st covid test then home	in school as normal	in school as normal	2nd test in school day	in school as normal
y11	TDD	TDD		1st covid test then home	in school as normal	in school as normal	2nd test in school day	in school as normal
C6th	TDD	TDD	1st covid test then home	Y12 induction	in school as normal	2nd test in school day	in school as normal	in school as normal

Testing is voluntary and students not undergoing testing should return to school in line with our arrangements, above. For example, if a Year 8 student is not participating in testing their first day back at school will be the day after the 1st Covid test for their year group, on Wednesday 8th September.

Administering the test should only take 5 minutes but please allow approximately between 15 and 30 minutes for your LFD Test 1 Appointment.

To ensure a steady flow of people and to allow for social distancing, it is very important that you respect the times given for each Tutor group and that you arrive in the Springfield car park 5 minutes before your allocated slot and not before. We may struggle to accommodate late arrivals.

The appointment times from Friday September 3rd until Tuesday September 7th for their first LFD tests are below:

Appointment times for LFD Test 1 (students do not need to wear uniform as they return home afterwards)

Time	Friday September 3	Monday September 6	Tuesday September 7
8.30 am.	Tutor Groups 7b1, 7b2	Tutor Groups 10f1, 10h1	Tutor Groups 8s1, 8h2
9.00 am.	7f1, 7f2	10s1 s2	8h1, 8f1
9.30 am.	7h1, h2	10b1 b2	8b1 8b2
10.00 am.	7s1	10h2	8f2
10.30 am.	7s2		
11.30 am.	6b1 6b2 6f1 6f2 Y12 only	11 f1 f2	9b1 9b2
12	6h1, 6h2, 6h3 Y12 only	11 h1 h2	9f1 9f2
12.30 pm.	6s1, 6s2, 6s3 Y12 only	11 s1 s2	9s1 9s2
1.30 pm.	6b1 6b2 6f1 6f2 Y13 only	11 b1	9h1
2.00 pm.	6s1, 6s2, 6s3 Y13 only		
2.30 pm.	6h1, 6h2, 6h3 Y13 only		

Parents should bring their children to the Springfield car park and a member of senior staff will greet students at the blue H block gate next to the All-Weather Pitch, asking them to sanitise and then directing them to the H block playground.

Another member of senior staff will greet them on the playground, showing where they line up. The playground fences have markers to show where each Tutor Group line up. Students will be given their pre-registered LFD Test card on entry to the Test Centre. Students must have these to take the LFD test; these cards ensure that notification of results go automatically to those who need them. Once tested, students are directed to leave via the same blue H block gate and return home.

The photos below show how lining up should work Friday through to Tuesday.



LFD Test 2 Wednesday 8th to Friday 10th September

For the second LFD Covid test, pupils will be brought to the test centre by their class teacher in their designated lesson. The teacher will accompany the class to the H block playground via the gate by the Dance Studio, wait with them and when complete, will accompany their class back to their room.

Return to Normal Uniform Arrangements from September 2021

During the course of this academic year, we have made temporary adjustments to our normal uniform policy. This has included students wearing PE kit to school on the days when they have PE or Dance lessons. We have made these adjustments due to the system of controls required for schools to reduce the spread of COVID-19. We know that although this has been popular with some families it has also caused difficulties for some as students have needed more PE kit items and fewer "standard" uniform items. We also know that the pandemic itself has caused issues for families as access to shoe and clothes shops was restricted in the early part of this year. As a result we have been more flexible with our uniform requirements this year, in recognition of the unusual circumstances.

I am writing to you today with advance notice that, from September 2021, our normal uniform requirements will be reinstated. Students will be expected to attend school every day in correct school uniform, changing into and out of PE kit for practical PE and dance lessons as before. Students will be required to change for PE next year. This is because of the hygiene concerns around teenagers remaining in PE kit all day. If students have PE period 1 and work up a sweat (as they should), or if it's raining and they get wet or muddy, it would be unhygienic and unhealthy for them to remain in PE kit for the rest of the day. This year we have adapted our PE curriculum because of COVID to avoid some of these issues, including more indoor PE and fewer team games and strenuous activities. However, we will be returning to a full PE curriculum from September and this will mean changing is essential.

During the academic year we waste vital learning time and have unwanted difficult conversations whilst dealing with those who let us down with their uniform by failing to meet our published uniform expectations. Here are some important reminders regarding the items which regularly cause concern. Please take this into account when making purchases over the summer ready for the new school year.

Shoes

These should be of a conventional smart style, appropriate for uniform wear and offer adequate protection in all weathers. They should be entirely black, made of leather/faux leather and be able to be polished. Trainers or canvas shoes are not permitted.

Skirts

These should be purchased from our approved supplier (Scholars of Chippenham). Please ensure that the size purchased allows the skirt to be worn at an appropriate length. As a guide the hem should be no more than one hands width above the knee. The skirt should not be worn rolled over at the waist.

Trousers

These should only be purchased from our approved supplier (Scholars of Chippenham) and should match the blazer.

Scholars Schoolwear Limited

3 The Causeway, Chippenham SN15 3BT Tel: (01249) 656600

<http://scholars-uk.com>

Jewellery, extreme hairstyles and make-up

During school closures and the holiday period it can be tempting for students to experiment with their hair or opt for a new 'look'. Please remember that the school does not permit extreme hairstyles (this includes unnatural hair colours, etc.) or coloured nails and excessive makeup. Nose studs and other facial piercings are not permitted to be worn during the school day, but students are allowed one stud in each ear.

Some of our students put their parents under enormous pressure to buy fashion items/get hair styles/facial piercings which they know are not acceptable as part of the uniform but will claim they are now allowed. I hope that by again sharing our clear guidelines before the summer holidays I can help you to resist this pressure. Your strong support for the school will help us to avoid problems in September when any student failing to meet these expectations during the day faces consequences which could result in them being removed from learning alongside their peers until the uniform matter is resolved. This action would be necessary but extremely disappointing as, after months of

school closure this year, I'm keen to maximise all face to face learning opportunities for your child going forward next term.

The vast majority of the students at The Corsham School get all of these expectations right all of the time and we will continue to plan for new ways of rewarding/praising them for this to guarantee that this is recognised and celebrated.

Can I thank you in advance for your backing on all these issues and if you have any questions about any matter I have raised above then please don't hesitate to contact your child's tutor in the first instance.

For some helpful visual guidance on uniform expectations, please see on our website. Please follow the link to view this information: [Uniform Expectations](#)

Also, this year we have successfully launched an online second-hand Uniform shop, which is linked [here](#)
Any orders placed over the summer can be collected from 3rd September 2021.

If you have any difficulties with this, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can assist, and avoid any issues over uniform at the start of the new academic year.

Visitors

We will be able to hold pre-arranged face-to-face meetings with parents and visitors from September onwards, where required. We will continue to offer phone calls and/or video conferencing as an option, as many families find these more convenient. However, please remember that all parent meetings must be pre-booked by appointment so that staff are prepared for the conversations, and so the meeting can be held at a mutually convenient time. Please help us to help you by pre-booking any meetings you need with members of staff at the school. We have received lots of positive feedback about our SchoolCloud Parents Booking system and our virtual meetings held this year, so parents' evenings will continue to be provided virtually over this service next year.

Staff Changes

On Tuesday we say goodbye to a number of staff colleagues leaving The Corsham School at the end of this academic year, including some very long-standing servants of our community. I have never been more grateful for the incredible staff we are so fortunate to have within our staff body. For those leaving for roles in other schools, or welcoming retirement, I feel particularly indebted to each of them for their contribution to the education of our students and their ongoing support of them under the extremely challenging circumstances of this last academic year. Their hard work and commitment to the learning and well-being of our students during my four year tenure has been greatly appreciated. I wish them all the very best for the future and hope they will carry with them very fond memories of their time working here.

A full list of staff leaving us for new beginnings are:

Shilvanti Mahmood (Science), Claire Smith (Careers Advisor), Timothy Brown (English), Laura Martinsen (Teaching Assistant), Ruth Hobbs (PE & Head of Freestone House), Claire Elmer (Art), Susan Whittingham (Cover Supervisor) and Susan Hawkins (CTL MFL).

New staff members joining us/who have already joined us for September 2020 are:

Matthew Bromwich - Teacher of Maths (Temp for 1 year)

Connie Hateley – Teacher of Maths

Hannah Walker - Teacher of Art

Holly Thompson - Teacher of PE (Temp for 1 Year)

Sophie Westlake – Curriculum Team Leader - Modern Foreign Languages

Tierney Elliott - Teacher of English

Laura Sutton – RE/History and Head of Freestone House

Mairead Rolfe - Teacher of Drama & Dance (Temp for 1 year)

Tom Douglas – Teacher of PE (Temp for 1 Year)

Emily Weston – Teacher of PE (Temp for 1 Year)

Louise Blake - Teaching Assistant
Charlie Sloan - Teaching Assistant
Catherine Ireland - Teaching Assistant
Emma Blackmore - Teaching Assistant

Year 8-13 Changed Tutor Group Arrangements from September:

9B1 - Ms Westlake replaces Ms Hawkins

11S1 - Mrs Fairhurst replaces Mr Brown

6S1 - Ms Wallin and Ms Gratton take over the tutor group from Mr Wilkes

6S2 - Mrs Richards replaces Ms Elmer

Other noteworthy key staff role changes for September include Sarah Dustan returning from her maternity leave to resume as Lead Teacher of Psychology at the same time as Liz Killigrew starts her maternity leave; we wish her good health and await news of the safe arrival of her baby.

It is pleasing to yet again be able to report that we are fully staffed for September and that we have been in the fortunate position of being able to welcome new staff joining us into school in person in recent weeks. I look forward to the future with great excitement about what we can accomplish together, under different circumstances, with our young people and your support.

Change in Mobile Phone Policy from September 2021

As a result of increasing evidence of students' addiction to their mobile phone and their notifications, growing incidence of inappropriate student use of their phone, their distractive nature which inhibits learning and progress and concern that young people spend too much time on their screens and school should be a break from such distractions, we have changed and tightened our mobile phone policy from September 2021. In essence, mobile phones should not be seen or heard in the school at any time during the school day and should be switched off and kept out of sight in students' bags or lockers throughout the school day. Please see all the details about this policy change in Mr Smith's separate letter.

Term Dates 2021/22

I thought it would be useful to remind you of the 2021/22 Teacher Development Days for next year, listed below, along with the new term dates/school holiday dates which can be found on our website via this link: [Term Dates 2021/2022](#) but also to highlight changes to our previously published student start dates.

The finalised school calendar of events for 2021-2022 will be available to view in due course by clicking on the following link: [School Calendar](#)

Teacher Development Days for 2021/22 (school closed for students)

Wednesday 1st September 2021 – Teacher Development Day 1

Thursday 2nd September 2021 – Teacher Development Day 2

Monday 29th November 2021 – Teacher Development Day 3

Friday 4th February 2022 – Teacher Development Day 4

Friday 22nd July 2022 – Teacher Development Day 5

Monday 25th July 2022 – Teacher Development Day 6

Wiltshire Public Health information - Play your part over the summer

The number of cases in Wiltshire continues to be below the national average but has increased again last week. The rate of cases per 100,000 has gone from 177 to 236.

With Step 4 on the Government's COVID-19 roadmap getting underway from today, but with case numbers continuing to rise, you are being asked to be cautious and ensure you are still playing your part to keep everyone safe and reduce the risk of transmission.

So, please keep washing your hands regularly or sanitising them, wear a face covering where required, socially distance as much as possible, get your first and second dose of the vaccine when offered, and if you have COVID symptoms, please book a test and self-isolate immediately.

Thanks for your support.



Looking ahead to next year

The pandemic will still be with us in the year ahead. However, the new guidance on contact tracing and isolation as outlined above will, we hope, reduce the disruption caused to education and allow us to return to a more normal learning experience. We are looking forward to what we hope will be an uninterrupted year with our students, to get back to what we do best – inspiring and enabling young people to make a positive difference and learn how they can be the best that they can be.

We are so grateful to our students for their positive attitudes and incredible character they have displayed this year. In our students I see bundles of potential, just waiting to be channelled and unleashed on the world. Even when things have been difficult and we haven't been able to provide the engaging learning experiences we ordinarily work hard to provide, they have continued to be a pleasure to work with. We are so proud of the positive difference they have made to themselves this year: the progress they have made in their learning; the confidence, resilience and determination they have built up as they have overcome challenges; and the kindness they have shown to themselves and others in their actions. As we step forward to next year and continue our pursuit of our main school development priority of providing an exceptional education, we look forward to what we can achieve together.

More immediately, of course, we are looking forward to a well-deserved summer break. After the year we've had, our students deserve some time to rest, recharge and recover – and our staff desperately need it too!

Thanks for your ongoing support and we hope you all have an enjoyable summer.

Please continue to stay in touch with us as often as you need and we will do whatever we can to help and support you with our further communications.

Look after yourselves and those around you.

Kind regards,

Rod Bell - Headteacher