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17<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we complete a school year that has been truly unique, I wanted to thank all parents for your extraordinary support during the COVID-19 period. I know balancing the pressures of supporting home learning alongside all the challenges of managing work and family responsibilities has resulted in this being a very difficult period for many parents.

All schools and settings are now planning for full opening and a return to compulsory education after the summer holiday. This will of course bring its own challenges.

### **Opening over the Summer Break**

The government is not asking schools and settings to remain open over the summer holidays. Schools and settings therefore will not be expected to open for vulnerable pupils and the children of critical workers over this period.

### **The Autumn Term**

The government has issued all schools and settings with advice about how they can open in September at minimal risk to pupils and to staff. Our approach throughout the COVID period has been to make the health and well-being of our children, families and staff our first priority. This will continue in the autumn term and local school based planning will still be based on a robust risk assessment process supported by our colleagues in public health and the council health and safety team. As throughout this period, every school and settings' approach will be different and will reflect local context and circumstances.

Almost all Luton schools have remained open throughout, so we have already seen that the protective measures and bubbles have worked well. Schools are now ready to scale this up. Your child's school or setting will advise you about any changes to routines, including for dropping pupils off and collecting them at the end of the day, or transport to school. If individual schools or settings need to operate phased returns, or to alter the times of the day temporarily, the details of this and the reasons for it will be made clear in advance. I reiterate again that the safety of our children, parents and school staff is, and always will be, our number one priority.

## **Attendance from September**

Through the wider opening period the decision regarding whether or not to send a child to school or not has been left to parents. In September, we return to compulsory attendance for all statutory age children. We recognise that for some children and families there will be a level of anxiety about return to school in September. We want to work with you in such situations so please keep in contact with your child's school and they will advise on the support that can be offered.

## **Catch-Up Funding**

You may have heard that the government will be providing funding so that schools and settings can provide additional tuition and other support to pupils so that any who have fallen behind can be helped to catch up. At the time of writing, detailed guidance has not been released about this. As soon as it has, we will work with schools to consider the best ways forward.

Please be assured that the Local Authority will continue to offer advice and guidance to all our schools as we prepare for September. Thank you again for all that you have done and are doing to support your children in these unprecedented times.

Take care and stay safe.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Wigglesworth', with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Wigglesworth  
Service Director for Education Services