

11 February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to you at the end of a long and challenging half term to thank you for the efforts you are all making to support your children's education and to support the country's fight against coronavirus.

The term certainly started with a bang, with schools being told to open and then to close as we entered the second national lockdown. Teachers had to reorganise the way they taught and you had to re-organise your lives. Some of you, as critical workers, keeping our key services operating and many of you as home workers and home schoolers, keeping our communities safe. The press is full of the negative impacts of lockdown on children's education, however I have seen many lovely photographs and video clips of you working and playing with your children. I can see that, despite the challenges, many of you have had some good times with your children during this period engaging in a wide range of creative learning experiences which will add so much to their lives.

We now know that we have to continue to operate in this way until at least March 8th on the basis of remote learning for all children with on-site support provided for some. We also know that we will hear more about the government's plans on or around the 22nd of February, but following any national announcement schools will need to wait for guidance from the Department for Education before we can finalise the arrangements for each of our schools. I am sure that there will be much media speculation at this time but can I ask you to wait until you hear from your headteacher before making any assumptions about the programme of return for your school. You may also be aware that there has also been speculation in the press about changes to holidays and the length of the school day, but we should not make any assumptions at this stage. I can assure you that if there are any changes planned for your school you will be the first to know.

I do know that many schools have had further requests for places after half term. Unfortunately, most of our schools have no additional space or capacity if they are also to support the children who are at home with their learning, so please do continue to support your children at home.

I know that many of you have sent thank you messages to school staff. If you would like to thank a member of staff in a special way you can use the national site called Thank a Teacher. Despite its name, it can be used to send a card to anyone who is working in a school, whether they are a teacher or not. It is free and is a wonderful way to thank someone who has helped you or your child during this time. The link is <https://thankateacher.co.uk/thank-a-teacher/thank-a-teacher-form/>.

In the meantime, do have a great half term and a break from home-schooling.

Look after yourselves and stay safe.

Yours sincerely,



Sue Samson

Chief Executive Officer

University of Chichester Academy Trust