



8<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

“When will schools reopen?”, sadly I do not yet have an answer to that, but all of us in the Red Kite Learning Trust want that day to come as soon as possible. Of course, our schools are not ‘closed’ – we are open for vulnerable children and the children of key workers. I would like to thank all of you who have made the decision to keep your child at home to help us keep places available in school for those that really need them.

We all appreciate just how hard it is for you and your children to cope with ‘home education’. As I know only too well it can be hard, even for teachers, to teach our own offspring! Staff in all our schools have been providing the best remote learning possible, including online resources, recorded and ‘live’ lessons. I have been so impressed by the ingenious and effective ways staff across the Trust have risen to the challenge of meeting the needs of our children at home and in school.

We wait for the Government to make decisions around when schools can re-open and we will do all we can to respond to whatever guidance is issued as quickly as possible. We have already been using the rapid ‘lateral flow tests’ in our secondary schools on a trial basis with children and staff and are set to begin home-testing of primary staff. The prospect of ‘mass testing’ all our secondary children before they return is daunting, but we will do all we can to make it work if it means getting children back into school safely.

Final plans for GCSE and A level ‘examinations’ this summer are emerging. Exams are cancelled but we will ensure that all young people receive grades that are meaningful and help them to progress to the next stage in their lives.

A lot of gloomy words have been written about this ‘COVID Generation’. One of our Headteachers recently pointed out how awful it was to label our children with the name of a disease. Instead, we focus on the positives - many of our young people are developing resilience and independence and are thriving on the ‘remote learning’ offer. We must not underestimate the capability of children and young people to ‘bounce back’ from periods of adversity. The same Headteacher suggested the title of “The Remarkables” to describe our children who have lived through this crisis, now that does sound more positive!

We do not underestimate the challenges some children have faced and not all have had reliable access to a laptop or tablet device. As a Trust we have been trying our very best to connect all our young people to their learning and our recently launched laptop donation appeal is part of this drive [JustGiving - RKLt Device Scheme](#) We also know that some are struggling with their mental health and as a Trust we are committed to doing all we can to support their needs.

The good news is that we can now glimpse the end of this sad period and it is time to plan with optimism for the time after COVID. We are starting that work by reviewing our values and thinking about what really big, audacious goals we can set for us to achieve together over the next one to five years. The Trust is all of us, every school, every child, every member of staff. We will listen to each

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other over the next few months, reflect on what we have learned through the pandemic and together help create an even better future for every child and family we serve.

We will see the end of lockdowns soon and the light will return. The brilliant Amanda Gorman, a 21-year-old poet, who spoke at the recent US Presidential inauguration captured it so well when she wrote:

*“For there is always light, if only we are brave enough to see it. If only we are brave enough to be it.”*

Have a restful Half Term break.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Sheriff', is positioned to the left of a large, faint, light-red graphic of a kite in flight that spans across the middle of the page.

**Richard Sheriff**  
CEO – Red Kite Learning Trust

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