



Leigh Academies Trust  
Carnation Road, Strood  
Rochester, Kent ME2 2SX  
t: 01634 412 200 f: 01634 412 201  
e: info@latrust.org.uk  
w: www.leighacademiestrust.org.uk

Chief Executive: Simon Beamish, BA (Hons) MSc PGCE NPQH NLE

Monday 13th July 2020

Dear parents and carers

**RE: planning for September and investment in technology.**

As we approach the end of the academic year - and what a year it has been - your child's Principal will shortly be writing to you with more details about the start of term in September and how our academies will operate next year. They will write again later in August confirming these details to provide you with additional confidence about how things are going to work.

Many of you will have read recent government guidance designed to support schools to reopen for all pupils full-time from the start of the autumn term. We will do everything we can to get all of our pupils back to school safely. We have been delighted to welcome as many as we could back to school since the start of June, but due to the current public health crisis, too many have still not been to school every day for too long.

Some points to bear in mind are as follows:

- Pupils will be organised into "bubbles", typically by year group, and will not be able to mix with pupils in other bubbles until guidance changes;
- Teachers and other adults will be able to move between pupil groups, but will maintain social distancing as much as they can;
- We will offer the full curriculum to all pupils and return to face-to-face subject teaching from the beginning;
- Attendance will be compulsory;
- Normal school uniform expectations will be reinstated;
- Pupils must follow our updated behaviour policies without exception, taking into account new arrangements to keep everyone safe;
- Enhanced hygiene and sanitation measures will be maintained;
- Test and trace procedures will be followed diligently;
- A full school meal service will be restarted for all pupils and staff;
- Pupils are encouraged to walk or cycle to school as much as possible and avoid public transport if they possibly can;
- Public transport will operate in greater volume, but pupils still needing to use it should practise social distancing as much as they can with any other pupils not within their own bubble whilst travelling; and
- All visitors, including parents, must observe "Covid-secure" protocols when coming onto the site of one of our academies for any purpose.

Our hope is that all pupils will be able to continue their full-time education at school throughout the whole of the academic year from September. However, we know that “local lockdowns” could occur and it may be necessary to ask certain groups of pupils to remain at home for periods of time if there is an outbreak or suspected outbreak in their bubble. With that in mind, all of our academies will be ready to reinstate at any time the arrangements for online learning that have been so effective since first implementation in March for pupils working from home.

Throughout this pandemic, we have learnt like never before how important it is for pupils to have access to modern technology. Some have been seriously hamstrung due to a lack of basic equipment and that cannot be right. I am delighted to confirm that the Trust will be distributing nearly 7,000 additional Chromebooks to identified secondary-age pupils from module 1 of next academic year. This will build upon and complement the several one-to-one device schemes already in place for about 30% of these pupils. This new development heralds a much expanded investment in the Trust’s digital strategy.

At the same time, every year 6 pupil across the Trust will now have access to their own Chromebook whilst at school in addition to the technology already available. Our two special schools will enjoy similar investments from September as many of their pupils benefit from much increased availability of Chromebook technology as well. All of these significant developments have only been made possible due to highly effective financial management in the Trust over recent years. Together, they will provide our pupils and staff with the tools to succeed as we emerge from Covid-19.

Further details on each of these matters and how they will work at a local level will be provided by your child’s Principal shortly. In the meantime, can I thank you once again for all of your tremendous support for our staff and the work they have done to continue the education of your children throughout the period since lockdown in March. It has been a quite remarkable year, but we will continue focusing on doing all we can to ensure pupils catch up with any learning they have missed and will make their welfare our top priority. We are confident that despite the many setbacks this year we can emerge stronger and more ambitious than ever to tackle the challenges ahead of us.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Beamish', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Simon Beamish**  
**Chief Executive**