



12 February 2021

Dear parents, carers and any other member of the John of Gaunt School community that may be reading this,

Monday 15th February is the start of the mid-term holiday and school will be closed. As things stand we have no idea when the school lockdown will lift, who it will apply to, how quickly it will be implemented, how mandatory it will be. The list of questions is enormous, but to speculate is of no use to anybody. So where does that leave us?

As Governors we set out to Mr Skipp and the school staff from the very first day of this Covid 19 pandemic that we see this as an exercise in simply getting by. We wanted everyone to know that decisions may well be taken that with the benefit of hindsight might not have been taken, but if taken with the best intentions they should not be fearful. We wanted everyone to know that when this is all over we want to look forward, not back and we wanted everyone to know that as a community we will grow stronger from this. We do wish to commend Mr Skipp and all the staff for their untiring commitment.

In terms of our expectations for the school, there has been a change of emphasis, but not direction. Safeguarding remains the #1 priority of ourselves and every other school in the country. We have updated our policies to reflect the new remote working arrangements, but otherwise nothing has changed. Our current aspirational vision for the school remains unchanged, as does our expectation around financial control. There have been changes to our short-term expectations due to remote learning, but nothing changes in the medium to long-term. And to re-emphasise the point I made earlier, once we're through this we will look forward not back. We will remind ourselves what makes this school great and we will build on it. There will inevitably be some catching-up to do, but we will see that as an opportunity not a problem. And we will look at the core foundations that are enabling us to get through this period and we will remind ourselves that the best time to judge performance is when we're challenged.

So, what is my ask to you all? In many ways my ask to you is to keep doing what you're doing. I can see from the Facebook messages and from the anecdotes shared with me that you and your children and young people are all missing the school. We are all trying our best and that's all anyone can ask of each other in a community. The school will continue to provide as much educational support as possible, the Governors will provide the licence to do what is necessary without compromising safety and for the parents and carers, I just ask that you do what you can with your children and young people as your own circumstances allow.

But my biggest ask for you all is to have patience. As I stated at the start of my message, we have no idea how or when this lockdown will end, but the likelihood is you will hear about it at the same time as the school. Whilst some amongst us will be elated, there will also be some who are nervous, both



The John of Gaunt School
A Community Academy

parents/carers and school staff. That is a perfectly human response and when the time comes I would like us to bear that in mind. We are as desperate to get back to normality as everyone, but it is more likely to be a journey than a specific date in the calendar.

Finally, I'd like to thank you. I hope we never go through anything like this again as long as we all live, but the support you have shown Mr Skipp and the rest of the school has been heart-warming. As a society we are learning who really matters in a time of crisis and I hope this is a memory we all carry once we come out the other side.

Stay safe everyone

On behalf of the Governing Body

