

20 March 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

As our schools in Anglian Learning close for all but the children of key workers, as defined by the government, and for pupils who may need additional support over the next few weeks, I wanted to write to reassure you of our commitment to help you and your child at this difficult time. Over the past two weeks my colleagues in each academy have worked hard to keep open schools in accordance with the wishes of the government, despite increasing numbers of pupils and staff becoming absent. At the same time, teachers and others have been developing materials and activities for pupils to ensure that when the decision came to close schools, there would be continuity of learning. If they have not already done so, schools will be in contact to explain how pupils and parents can access these resources, some of which will be provided through school email or on the school website, others via the multitude of online learning platforms that we subscribe to. However, sustaining learning in the absence of normal schooling has not been attempted for this long a period before, and we ask for your patience as we continually develop new resources and adjust to the fact that it may be some time before schools open again.

A consequence of this uncertainty was reflected in the announcement from the Secretary of State for Education on Wednesday, confirming that the government will not go ahead with primary school assessments or secondary exams this summer, which includes SATs, GCSE and A Level examinations. I appreciate that this news will be very concerning for our pupils and that they will have a number of questions which require answering. At this time, all we know is that the government is working with the trusts, local authorities and Ofqual to ensure our pupils get the qualifications they need and deserve. Hopefully, more details will become available soon on what steps will be taken to achieve this. At the same time, if your child was due to take one of these assessments, please do stress, as we have done, that exams never capture everything about a young person and that developing such skills and values as personal resilience, care for others, teamwork, a thirst for knowledge and optimism are equally as important as any grade on a piece of paper. And at this time, more than any other, such attributes are what our communities need and where our young people can play their part.

As a Trust, we have also been putting into place systems and structures to support those pupils who are eligible for free school meals. We are working with our catering providers and looking into a process to issue food vouchers while we wait for the government to confirm details of a nationwide voucher scheme. We will be in contact with you about this as soon as possible.

We have also put into place a process of welfare checks for particular pupils, as part of our statutory duty to safeguard children and young people. However, if at any stage you are facing difficulties financially or with the welfare of yourself or your children, please do not hesitate to contact the school. Safeguarding leads and senior staff are here to support you and if we cannot help, we can put you in touch with someone who can. The details of key staff are on school websites.

Finally, on behalf of all of my colleagues at Anglian Learning, my best wishes for your health and wellbeing, and that of your family, for the weeks and months ahead and we look forward to celebrating with you the next step taken in your child's education or training or alternatively, when we can welcome you and your child back into their school.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Culpin', written in a cursive style.

Mr J Culpin
Chief Executive Officer