



12th July 2020

Dear Colleagues

End of the 2019/20 Academic Year

I wanted to write as we approach the end of term to reflect both on our work over the last year and on the key challenges facing us in the coming year. In doing so, I recall the words I used with Principals last August; that we need “in the coming year ... to continue to harness into a powerful educational force what we individually bring to our team.” Little did I know then of the looming need for even greater collaboration, deeper mutual support and an ever more collegiate approach than we ever thought possible. I want to thank each of you and your teams for the incredible way you have come together and worked tirelessly to maintain our academies and to support our pupils and students – and each other – through the lockdown, and since the wider opening began last month. We know that many pupils and students have engaged really positively and successfully with home learning; however, we also know that some have not, which adds an extra challenge in the coming year. Regardless of that, we are seeing huge commitment and engagement from those who have returned so far, alongside a real commitment to catch-up on lost learning.

There has been much talk in the media predicting a *lost generation* of young people as a result of the lockdown and loss of education. It is now our responsibility in schools to make sure this prediction does not become a reality. In just the same way that our colleagues in the health service have gone above and beyond to protect and save lives, it is our responsibility in the coming years to go above and beyond in order to protect and secure the life chances of the young people in our academies. This might be described simplistically as *catch-up* (an expression I shall use), but there is a danger that such a term suggests a simple concept; catch-up will not be a linear process, it will not be the same for every pupil and student and will not be a time-limited activity. We need to work differently with pupils and students over the coming year – and possibly beyond – to correct the educational disadvantage caused by the lockdown. Of course, many pupils and students experience other sorts of disadvantage, and we must look to match this catch-up process to each pupil’s / student’s specific and highly personalised needs. The different approaches we will need will present all of us – whether we work in the classroom or in business support functions – with new challenges and additional demands; I know that you will rise to these challenges and demands with your usual determination to deliver the very best for our pupils and students.

The most important response we will make next year to achieve this catch-up will be in the regular classroom. Our pupils and students will rely upon first class teaching, driven by the strong relationships that build a detailed understanding of learning needs, with those learning needs addressed by our excellent teachers, learning support assistants and learning coaches. We know that we will also receive additional resource that will allow us to create that little bit of further value to complement work in the classroom, and it is important we use this with real purpose. This means our ambition must be to ensure every pupil and student reaches the point in the coming year that they would otherwise have reached if the lockdown had not occurred.

As usual at the end of the term we shall be saying goodbye to a number of colleagues; to those leaving TCT I would like to say thank you and offer every best wish for the future. I would also like to wish everyone a safe and restful summer and look forward to welcoming colleagues back into our academies in September.

Yours sincerely

Mr Gordon Smith
Chief Executive

Registered Office: The Collegiate Trust

A: Honister Heights Purley Surrey CR8 1EX
T: 03300 100 701
E: admin@tct-academies.org
W: www.tct-academies.org