

27th April 2022

Dear parent / carer

Welcome back to the start of the summer term. I hope you managed to get a break over the Easter period and were able to enjoy some down-time.

Good luck to the pupils preparing for assessments in May and June.

The number of COVID cases seems to be low this week and I very much hope that remains the case. The basic summary is we should now treat COVID in the same way we might if we caught 'flu. The latest guidance is here:

[People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

The latest guidance on symptoms is here:

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms in adults - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

We need to strike the right balance in managing any risks now. Please exercise caution if your child has COVID symptoms. On the other hand, we need to help pupils maintain the highest attendance possible. The impact of lockdowns on young people is now becoming clearer. Figures from the NHS indicate that referrals to mental health services doubled in April 2021. OFSTED have also noted the adverse effects of pupils missing school. Good attendance is one of the best indicators of academic achievement and we will do all we can to help pupils attend school well. Please get in touch with your child's school if we can help you.

In line with government guidance, we will maintain the ability to deliver lessons remotely but will only do so in exceptional circumstances from now on. Teachers will help pupils catch up with missing work when they return to school.

If you need any help or advice, please get in touch with your child's school in the usual way.

On a completely different note, last term we received the academy order for Whitcliffe Mount to join our trust. The target date for the conversion is 1st September but we are keeping the option of 1st July open too. We have worked closely with Whitcliffe Mount for a number of years. Many of



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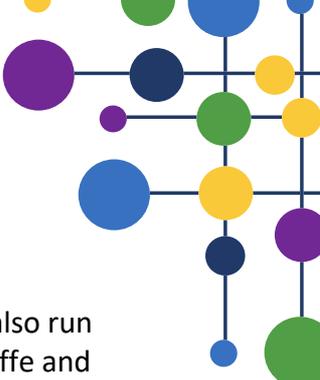


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you with children at Heaton Avenue will also have children at Whitcliffe Mount. We have also run training courses together for a number of years. This is a natural next step for both Whitcliffe and Share Multi Academy Trust. It will strengthen our ability to train staff and improve standards for our pupils.

The government produced a White Paper and a Green Paper just before the break. The White Paper covered their plans for every school to join a strong trust. We think this could be a positive step. It also stated that school hours must add up to 32.5 hours per week. Some of our academies are below this figure because they run shorter lunchtimes. The government require us to change before September 2023 and we are currently planning how we might change the school day. We want to use any extra time for purposeful activities, rather than extend break-times. We may also need to consult staff about changes to their working hours. Each headteacher will get in touch with you to share any changes and will give you plenty of time to prepare.

The Green Paper will be of particular interest to any parent who has a child with a disability or special educational need. The government use a Green Paper to consult about changes. They are proposing to make some significant changes to the systems in place to support pupils with additional needs. You can read about it here:

[Ambitious reform for children and young people with SEND - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/ambitious-reform-for-children-and-young-people-with-send)

We are also working on a strategic plan for the trust. This letter contains a simple overview of the plan, which places the wellbeing and success of our pupils at its heart. I hope our aims match your aspirations for our schools. Please feel free to share your views via our dedicated e-mail address:

share.strategy@sharemat.co.uk

We hope to adopt the plan around July time and it will run for about five years.

I hope this term goes well and good luck to all the pupils taking examinations.

Your sincerely



John McNally
CEO Share Multi Academy Trust