

Message from Debi Bailey, CEO

Dear parents and carers

As we welcome in a new half term, the fourth of this school year, many of us are beginning to feel more hopeful. The nights are lighter and the mornings brighter.



The government's announcement on Monday about the roadmap of how we will return to 'normal' provided us all with hope that we will, one day soon, be out of this. Thank you for your patience and understanding. We know that you desperately want your children back in school - thank you for giving us the time we need to make this happen successfully.

I am sure many of you are also feeling a little anxious as to what the next few weeks and months may bring. You could argue that we have been here before with case numbers falling and lockdown restrictions easing, only to go back in to another lockdown. What is different this time is that we have vaccinations rolling out at pace and an acknowledgement that we will need to learn to live with Covid and therefore we need to take responsibility for keeping ourselves – and others - safe. You can all do your part by following the rules and making sure our children do too.

Please continue to let school know if you or a family member is displaying any symptoms and the best bit of advice I've heard is to act like everyone around you has Covid. Until we have enough people vaccinated, we must stay vigilant if we want our schools to stay open and our communities return to as near to 'normal' as they can. Our schools are safe but we all need to play our part in keeping them safe.

Leaders across the trust have been working hard to make sure that our schools are ready to welcome back all of our young people. Every school has remained open throughout the latest

lockdown so all routines are well established. Remember we had all children in until December and our schools were buzzing with excitement.

School leaders will keep you updated over the next few days so you will know exactly what to expect from the 8th March. We will also continue to provide regular communications throughout the rest of this term.



Benfield School wins Kellogg's Best Breakfast Club in the North East

Brilliant news for Benfield this week with its breakfast club judged to be the best in the north east region by a panel of judges at the Kellogg's Breakfast Club Awards.

The award includes a cash prize of £1,000 to spend on the club, as well as a "party pack" to help students celebrate.



Mrs Wardle, Assistant Headteacher at Benfield School
Image: Kellogg's

Maria Irving, Deputy Headteacher, who put forward the nomination to Kellogg's said: "We are delighted to have received the award for Best Breakfast Club in the North East. We are proud recipients and feel it acknowledges the service we are providing daily for the Benfield School community. It also reinforces the significance of everyone having access to breakfast at the start of every day, irrespective of the difficult situation we have encountered during the Covid period."

You can read more about this great story in the Newcastle Evening Chronicle:

<https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/school-breakfast-club-kept-newcastle-19910315>

Congratulations to Mrs Wardle and all of the team at Benfield for providing such fantastic support to our students!

Looking ahead to the future: Making A Difference Together

We have started some exciting conversations to plan how the trust will move forwards over the next 3 years. You have a key role to play.

All of our schools will soon be engaging with families to find out what we are doing well and what you would like to see in the future.

We are also interested to hear what your aspirations are for yourselves, your families and our trust. Please look out for ways of joining in the conversation - this is how we will make a difference together.



Insight of the Week

Rather than share a poem this week, I am sharing a philosophy - something for us to reflect on from Maya Angelou.



Wellbeing Tip of the Week

There is some really great information out there to help families physically and mentally.

Again a huge thank you to the fantastic Mrs Wardle at Benfield School for sharing this week's tips on activities to do with your child at home during lockdown to help their mental health, which you'll find on the next page.

Why not try these next week to support their emotional wellbeing before all children return to school from Monday 8 March?

Please take care of yourselves and each other.

9 ACTIVITIES TO DO WITH YOUR CHILD AT HOME DURING LOCKDOWN TO HELP THEM LOOK AFTER THEIR MENTAL HEALTH



1 MINDFUL COLOURING

There are a number of great mindful colouring books that can boost creativity and help your child stay focused on the present moment



2 MY HAPPY PLACE

Find a quiet and relaxing space and for 5 minutes close your eyes and imagine yourselves in a safe, calm and soothing place



3 MINDFULNESS

Encourage your child to use all their senses to try and connect with an activity that they are doing



4 BOX BREATHING

Use box breathing as a simple way to teach your child how to effectively engage in breathing techniques



5 DEEP BREATHING

Deep breathing is a great technique to help your child calm both their mind and body



6 EXERCISE

Play or engage in some exercise with your child. This is great for boosting mood and reducing stress and anxiety



7 3 GOOD THINGS

Each night before bed encourage your child to write down 3 good things they have achieved from their day and what it says about them as a person



8 SELF SOOTHE BOX

Create a self soothe box with your child. This is a box that includes items which connect to all your senses and help calm you down during times of distress. E.g. smell - a scented candle, sight - a picture that evokes a positive memory



9 SCHEDULE

Use an activity schedule and work with your child to schedule things into their week which provides them with a sense of pleasure, achievement and connectedness



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