



Richard Cranmer
Chief Executive Officer

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Dear Staff, Governors, Trustees, Parents and Carers in St Benet's Schools,

I hope that this letter finds you and your families well and that you have managed to take some time in your busy lives to rest and prepare for the forthcoming academic year.

You will be well aware of the challenges leading up to the publication of the GCSE results and I would like to start by congratulating the Year 11 students at our High School, Archbishop Sancroft, for their achievements in their GCSE's; despite experiencing a very different year they have thoroughly deserved the grades they have been awarded.

This success reflects their hard work and focus over their five years at ASHS and continues the trajectory of improving the good standards across the school. In other circumstances we would be celebrating record results and we hope, once the dust has settled, to celebrate them properly. Staff and parents should feel very proud of all that they have done to support the Class of 2020.

Looking ahead to the start of term and re-opening of schools, I would like to reassure everyone involved with all the schools in St Benet's MAT that I have every confidence in the ways in which our Headteachers have prepared for this to happen safely. They have continued to work during the holiday period to provide extensive, detailed and appropriate risk assessments for my colleagues in the MAT to review, challenge and approve. Between us we are responding to guidance from the Department for Education as it is published and we will continue to adapt to any further changes as the scientific advice may require. Senior colleagues and their staff in each school are working hard to ensure that children will be returning with real purpose and not just "coming back".

I ask please for your patience and understanding as our Headteachers put in place the plans that we have for the new term. Some of these plans will undoubtedly need adjusting once we see how they work in practice and we will continue to keep you informed of them. Our absolute priority is to offer as safe an environment as possible for exciting and important learning to take place.

Every one of us associated with our schools is anxious about this next step - we are living in troubled times; the economic and political environments are challenging with ethnic tensions more evident, the financial gap between rich and poor getting bigger as well as the attainment gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children. Anxiety is a normal human experience at times like this as we are naturally apprehensive about how the plans will work. It would be easy to despair, but all of us associated with schools - as parents, governors, trustees and staff - have reason to be optimistic. Our schools are sanctuaries of hope and love, enabling us to engage with and understand differences and celebrate them.



“Part of being optimistic is keeping one’s head pointed toward the sun, one’s feet moving forward. There were many dark moments when my faith in humanity was sorely tested, but I would not and could not give myself up to despair. That way lay defeat and death.” Nelson Mandela

I am extremely proud of the way in which our staff in each school have approached the challenge that has faced us since March and am confident that they will continue in this supportive, positive and caring way to ensure that our schools can once again become alive with the sounds of happy children enjoying their learning.

Let’s keep our heads pointing at the sun. I wish everyone in our community a safe, positive and successful year.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Cranmer
Chief Executive Officer