



17 July 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

This academic year has been, sorry to use the phrase, a roller-coaster (at least I did not use the word unprecedented!).

There has, however, been much which we should celebrate, and I attach a small sample of highlights for you. I would also urge you to look at the various schools' newsletters/news pages on websites. The pupils /students' engagement with learning and team activities has been tremendous, and this has been a source of motivation for each other and for staff.

What has struck me is the range of experiences that the children and young people have had over the lockdown and so I am launching a competition for students to write about them. I will judge it with some of our Trustees and I will provide a selection of prizes for different year groups across the Trust.

LOCKDOWN MEMORIES COMPETITION

A maximum of 150 words on your lockdown memories whether happy, perhaps sad, funny, surprising, exciting, uplifting ... You can write prose or poetry, a letter or diary entry, possibly even a mini-sketch. You can hand write it or do it on the computer.

Please send your entries to CEOcomp@maidenerleghtrust.org
by 4 September 2020.

Please include your full name, school and year group.
*(If you would prefer to remain anonymous if we publish your work,
just let me know and I will leave your name off it.)*

I want to thank you so very much for all your support of the staff and children over the last few months. I know that it has not been easy for many of you, but you have been positive and encouraging throughout. This means a great deal to all of us and as a result, the engagement of pupils/students has been very positive overall. It has also meant that we have been able, in the vast majority of cases, to allay the children's anxieties about returning or any gaps they may have in their learning.

With regard to September, I want to reassure you that staff are very mindful of the fact that children's experience of lockdown will be very different and that our response will need to vary. We have already started to evaluate pupil and student wellbeing and any potential academic "gaps" and we are finalising very robust plans for September. Our "Welcome and Wellbeing" Strategy will evolve over time and adapt to the children's needs. As with all our planning, safety is paramount, but we also want to re-establish familiar routines and expectations for the pupils and students as they have been deprived of this "normality" for so long and it is important that they reconnect with it as far, and as soon, as possible. We believe that this will be the bedrock for reassuring them about their future and strengthening their resilience and wellbeing.

At this point, it would be remiss of me not to spare a few words for our fantastic Year 6, Year 11 and Year 13 students who have missed out on so many things that have been taken for granted up to now - not just the taking of their examinations. I am so sorry we did not get to give them our usual "send-off" and that they did not get their proms and last day celebrations. We will see many of our secondary students in August when they collect their results, and many will join us in the sixth form at Maiden Erlegh School. Hopefully we will be able to have our awards ceremonies in the autumn too. Whatever the future holds, we congratulate them on their hard work over the years they were with us, and their contribution to their respective schools, and we are hugely proud of them. Their time with us has left fond memories and an impressive legacy for future cohorts, showcasing resilience, kindness, maturity and hope. We wish them all the very best for the future and congratulate them sincerely and absolutely on their achievements.

Despite being in lockdown, the Trust has been moving forwards and the future looks very positive. We welcomed Hamilton School into our community in January and the transformation already achieved is excellent, thanks to colleagues there. Work has also started on River Academy.

I have been pleased by the engagement of stakeholders with the next phase of our diversity work and thank those who have fed back with very constructive and positive ideas for this project. We will be engaging with students next academic year, but I repeat my invitation for parents to share their ideas by writing to me through my PA z.watkiss@maidenerleghtrust.org to arrange a conversation in the new academic year. Please do not worry if I do not respond immediately - I am collating all the feedback received.

This year we have welcomed and recruited an array of fantastic new colleagues to cement teams in all areas of the organisation, including two fantastic new Headteachers (Mr Hartley at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge and Mrs Straw at Hamilton School). Furthermore, we have worked with 19 Newly Qualified Teachers and 20 trainees (with 14 others who came on second placements). I am extremely blessed to work with exceptional colleagues, all of whom bring different levels of experience but also enthusiasm, dedication and ambition for all our pupils and students, based on a real understanding of the importance of every child getting their fair chance in the world.

This moral purpose has never been so evident as over the last few months, and I want to thank publicly and sincerely again all my colleagues in the schools and in the Trust for all their hard work and resilience. I very rarely single people out, but I must put on the record my gratitude to the Headteachers and the Trust Operations team, who have worked tirelessly to manage the situation over the last few months. I also thank the Trustees and Local Advisory Board Members who have supported the schools brilliantly: we must never forget that they are volunteers.

As we go into the summer holidays, it is important that we all use this time to recuperate and restore our strength and energy. Next year will continue to be different, but hopefully getting back to being more familiar and reassuring. We are all going to have to continue to work hard, be vigilant and be prepared to adapt. What I know, however, is that all members of our community will meet the challenges head on, with the typical Maiden Erlegh "can do" and collaborative attitude.

I have been so proud of the whole Maiden Erlegh community over the past year, more so than ever before. Please enjoy your summer, be safe and responsible, but enjoy your summer.

Yours sincerely



Miss M Davies
Chief Executive Officer