

## **An open letter from John Halsall, Leader of Wokingham Borough Council to schools in Wokingham Borough:**

It has been a challenging year for everyone involved in education. I am impressed by the way in which everyone has come together; pupils, parents, carers, teachers and other support staff; to ensure that the children of Wokingham have had the best possible educational experience during these unprecedented times.

As we reach the end of the summer term, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your patience, hard work and dedication throughout this academic year. From adapting to new ways of learning, whether at home or at school, your efforts have been tremendous.

As we move to Step 4 of the roadmap, I am sure that there are many aspects that teachers, parents, and children are looking forward to as restrictions are lifted. However, as I am sure you will know, the number of Covid-19 cases in our borough is increasing, which is reflective of the national picture. For this reason, I would like to encourage you to remain vigilant throughout the summer holidays and be mindful of how we can continue to support our local community by being cautious, careful, and kind. We can do this by continuing to work together in the following ways:

- Continuing with regular rapid lateral flow testing when asymptomatic and PCR testing when you have symptoms
- Wearing face coverings in crowded areas such as public transport
- Isolating when positive or when contacted by NHS Test and Trace or when advised to by the NHS Covid-19 app
- Being aware of the latest status of international countries and what this means for travel and isolation
- Minimising indoor contact where possible and using outdoor spaces to meet others

We are all looking forward to a safe and enjoyable summer break and in remaining cautious, careful, and kind, we can continue to build on the success that we have all worked hard for to reach this point.

As a borough, we will continue to support you in the decisions that you take for yourselves and your family. We understand it can be difficult under the current circumstances and we encourage you to recognise the different circumstances each and every one of us faces.

Schools will continue to have safety at the forefront of their minds as we close the academic year and as they begin planning for the next. As always, it is important to understand that what may work for one school or setting, may not work in another. All decisions are made with the interest of children, families, and staff members at the centre.

We will continue to maintain regular contact with our schools and early years settings who are open for summer provision, to support them in their arrangements and planning for the autumn term. Thank you again for all of your hard work, dedication and commitment to the children. I wish you all a pleasant and restful summer break.

Be cautious, be careful, be kind.

John Halsall