



Thursday 10th December 2020

Dear Families,

As this tumultuous term draws to an end, I thought it requires a moment of reflection.

Our Head teachers and their staff have worked tirelessly to implement the new "normal". I am sure you will have experienced how pleased our children are to be back with their friends and learning in the school environment. Of course, to achieve this required a total re organisation of how schools operate at every level. This is what we have come to expect from our dedicated workforce in the Gosforth Schools' Trust. This achievement has been huge, especially when it is viewed in the light of constant changing and unclear advice and guidance as to what the rules to reopen were! This continues to be a logistical roller coaster for our schools. I would like to pay tribute to our Head Teachers, Governors and all our staff for this achievement. They have worked so hard behind the scenes to make reopening our schools work. Also, I would like to thank you, our families, for your support and trust in helping us achieve this new "normal" in what has been an extremely trying time. We are now into the challenging time of isolation of children, bubbles, classes as well as staff and this really is difficult to manage and predict. We can't do what we do without the support from you, our families, thank you.

We also see one of long serving head teachers from Grange First School, Mr Matthew Ward, leave the Gosforth Schools' Trust to join West Jesmond Primary School. We will miss his support and considered advice and thank him for all his hard work not only at Grange but for the Trust. We wish him well for the future.

On Tuesday 8th December the Government informed schools that they are now permitted to move a planned training day for 2021 to Friday 18th December so that the pupils' last day would be Thursday 17th December. This has been suggested in order to support school leaders with the management of contact tracing, which needs to continue for six days after schools break up for Christmas. **The eleven schools in the Gosforth Schools' Trust have discussed this offer and have made the decision to remain open to pupils on Friday 18th December** so that parents and carers are not faced with the difficult task of making childcare arrangements with such little notice. We also wish to retain our training day in the spring term when it can be used effectively to support staff development.

It will be a very different Christmas for us all this year. I hope the holidays bring to all our staff and families some rest and peace. I wish you a Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Karen Elliott
Chair of the Gosforth Schools' Trust.