

1 June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you are all well and had an enjoyable half-term.

As many of you will be aware, today is the day that the Government said that schools should start reopening their doors to children and young people.

To support the economy, the focus is very much on the primary schools in these early days - and over the next six weeks we will see the whole of the education sector start to make the first tentative steps back to “normality”.

As I have said to you before, we will not be rushed into reopening. This is particularly important as we believe that it is prudent to put into place plans to help us manage a possible second national/local spike. When students return, therefore, it will be done in a sensible and pragmatic fashion that is developed around a strategy about how we can provide the best support for the next 12 months, not just react to immediate pressures.

As such, our plans are in three workstreams:

**1) Resources and estates**

- We will be opening in some form at the end of June for Year 12s. While this is unlikely to be focused on delivering lessons, we will be providing support to help students catch up, to set work and crucially, to look after their welfare needs.

We are using this period to roll-out our extensive plans around keeping social distancing measures in place. This also includes educating students on how to respond to these new health and safety initiatives while there are smaller numbers in our colleges.

**2) Understanding the needs of each student**

- Unfortunately, we believe that Covid will be an issue that we need to manage beyond the end of this academic year. Given that our Year 12s only have limited time before their exams in 2021, we need to work with them to understand their individual needs. This includes understanding how they intend to get to College if there is no easy access to public transport, the health considerations in their homes and access to IT. A tutor will be communicating with your family about this shortly.

Our hope is that we can then tailor plans to the needs of each student, reducing the potential for us having to make blanket decisions that may adversely impact on some students more than others.

### 3) Our education offer

- In addition to the risk of a second spike, the current Government guidance means that not all of our students will be able to come into our colleges at the same time - even when we do start to reopen.

We need to ensure that we are in a strong position to continue to support your child through our online learning platforms, so we will be looking at how to further complement face-to-face teaching with online support.

I will be letting you know more about this over the coming weeks, and we will be sharing our plans with you.

The last few months have been difficult on so many levels for so many people. I am, however, a firm believer that we have to find positives in all of this – it will help us to come back stronger.

This really struck me during a call I had with one of our Colleges just before half-term. Within all the deliberations about plans, risk assessments and Government guidelines, it was heartening to hear stories of our students and staff supporting their communities through lockdown. From those who were volunteering/working at care homes and hospitals, to people taking the time to support their neighbours, the more I heard, the prouder I was to be part of our community.

These efforts should not go unnoticed. While it is vital that we celebrate the incredible educational and academic achievements of our students, we should also applaud the young adults they are becoming. If you know of one of our students who has impressed you during the challenges of the last two months, please do let us know, by emailing [avril.clark@suffolkone.ac.uk](mailto:avril.clark@suffolkone.ac.uk) in the first instance as it is important that the efforts of our students are acknowledged.

Thank you for your continued support.

Warm regards,

Dr Nikos Savvas

Chief Executive Suffolk Academies Trust