



Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to our third annual newsletter from Portico Academy Trust, albeit two months late! Our five schools, Friars Primary and Nursery, Hamstel Infant School and Nursery, Hamstel Juniors, Porters Grange Primary and Nursery and West Leigh Juniors, all remained open throughout lockdown to cater for the children of key workers and any vulnerable children in our communities. We all then opened to a variety of year groups throughout June and July.

As everyone constantly remarks, these are unprecedented times. I hope that you and your families were safe and healthy throughout lockdown and you have continued to thrive in the last few months.

All of our schools returned to full working on September 3rd and it has been a joyful and settled start to the school year. All of our teachers, but especially the senior teams in each school, planned very carefully for a safe and secure return. Our Principals/Heads shared ideas and thoughts with each other to prevent working in a vacuum. We have become experts in the world of virtual meetings.

The enthusiasm of the children has been wonderful and attendance has been very high. All of our teachers are now planning their teaching to challenge our children academically, within as an active and fun based classroom as



possible.

We would all like to thank our parent community for trusting us to bring the children back to school and for being so patient and understanding with all the restrictions we have had to put in place. We are also very appreciative of those of you who comply with social distancing and face coverings when around the schools. With these measures in place we hope to beat the virus in our communities and keep as many



children in school as possible.

I know that each school has communicated with you about the learning which will be in place should groups of children need to isolate. I imagine that across our five schools with two and a half thousand children in our care, we may experience some 'bursting bubbles' in the coming months. We will all

do our best to minimise the break in routine by supplying work for those days at home.

We all look forward to the time when we can, once again, safely work together – be it our teachers training together or our children playing sport, holding competitions, quizzes, working on design and art across our schools.

Once the building trades were able to return to work, we welcomed teams into our schools for a variety of building works, some paid for from our budget, some from Government grants. We will continue to fund

further works and to bid for more grants in order to maintain our buildings and grounds to the highest standards.

Our funding is centralised and the finance team at Portico House is working tirelessly to make sure our money works efficiently and smartly. It is our aim to make savings where we can, to use group procurement to make our money work harder and enable us to spend as much as possible directly on the



children. During this year we will be funding further spending on computers, iPads and our technical infrastructure across each of our schools. We will ensure that our schools continue to be well resourced. Unfortunately, but totally necessarily, we are spending a large sum of money, each month, on soap, hand sanitiser, towels etc to keep Coronavirus at bay.

Recently, following a lengthy consultation with our five Local Governing Bodies, the Trustees took the decision to restructure our governance, with the assent of the vast



majority of our governors. We no longer have the LGBs in place, but we have extended our Trustee Board, inviting a number of governors to sit on the Board, including some governors who are parents from our schools.

Our Chair of Trustees remains Bob Hellen, our Vice Chair is Graham Lane. Below you'll find the names of the other Trustees. The Trustees will be working very closely with our schools and I will continue to visit each school regularly and spend time talking to the Principals/Heads and their senior teams.

Our Trustee Board:

Cheryl Woolf - CEO
Bob Hellen - Chair of Trustees
Graham Lane - Vice Chair of Trustees
Kate Baynes
Alan Murkin
Frances Gretton
Heather Oram
David Struthers
Sue Hay
Ron Wright
Karen Packer
Claire Smith
Ros Sanders

Should you wish to contact me or any Trustee, please use the details in the footer of this newsletter.



I hope as the year progresses you are able to enjoy the family opportunities afforded by Halloween, firework night and Christmas itself, followed by, let's hope, a Covid free spring and summer.

My best wishes for your health and safety to the end of 2020 and into 2021.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Woolf
CEO of Portico Academy Trust