

December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

As this term draws to a close, I would like to take the opportunity to offer a heartfelt 'thank you' to you and the local community who have shown support and consideration during this term.

Staff have endeavoured to teach the best they possibly can in very different and difficult circumstances. For our pupils and students getting used to what has become the 'new normal' has also been, at times, challenging. However, from our very youngest early years pupils at Broom Leys to our Apollo Sixth Form students, all have shown positivity and a determination to achieve. We are very proud of them all.

As we near the end of term, I would like to take this opportunity to specifically thank Mr Michael Gamble and Mrs Katrina Farragher who have been taking on an interim role of Head of School at The Castle Rock School and The Newbridge School. They have not only led their schools through two terms of Covid-19, but also through Age Range Change and for Mr Gamble, the merge of two schools and the closure of King Edward VII College.

At The Castle Rock School, we are very pleased to have appointed Mr Duncan Baldwin as our new Head of School who will take up the post officially in January 2021. Mr Baldwin has been a part of school leadership teams for many years and brings with him a wealth of experience and knowledge around data, assessment and curriculum. He will work alongside myself, as Secondary Executive Headteacher, Deputy Heads – Mr Mick Rowbottom, Ms Emma Booth and Mr Michael Gamble (who returns to his substantive post) and our Assistant Heads – Mrs Danielle Clayfield, Mrs Tamar Dennis, Ms Aimee Kinder and Mrs Nic Raphael.

We welcome Mr Baldwin to The Apollo Partnership Trust and look forward to working with him, driving secondary school improvement and curriculum innovation and planning.

At The Newbridge School, having undertaken a robust appointment programme, we were not able to appoint a substantive Head of School. We will be looking to appoint a permanent role for September 2021. In the meantime, Mrs Farragher and Ms Fox will be sharing the leadership of the school, supported by myself and Assistant Heads – Mr Nick Schober and Mrs Donna Thornton.

All of our Trust schools work very closely together both supporting and challenging each other in order to be the best we can be – this has never been more prevalent than during this past term.

Over the final two weeks of term, I would like to reiterate, should your child develop any symptoms of Covid-19, that you keep them off school until a negative test has been confirmed. Likewise, if any member of your household develops symptoms, again please keep your child at home until a negative test has been confirmed. In addition, social distancing, regular hand washing and the appropriate wearing of masks remain imperative against the spread of the virus. It is vital that we all follow government guidance.

Last night the government announced that schools may close for students on Thursday 17th December and hold a training day for staff on Friday 18th December. However, this is not, as it has been reported in some newspapers, an extra day off for students. It has been offered as an alternative to swap a teaching day with a staff training day. The Apollo schools have all planned detailed and extensive training for staff in January which we cannot move at short notice. Therefore, we have made the decision to remain open for students on Friday 18th December with, as it is tradition, a slightly earlier finish for our secondary schools. Mrs Farragher, Mr Gamble and Mr Prior will be sending home further information regarding this and also about procedures that you should follow if your child tests positive or develops symptoms during the first 48 hours after the school closes, as 'direct contacts' of anyone who tests positive, or develops symptoms, **MUST** self-isolate for 14 days.

Spring Term 2021

The schools will re-open for students at Broom Leys on Monday 4th January 2021 and for The Castle Rock School and The Newbridge School on Tuesday 5th January 2021 (staff training sessions will take place on Monday 4th January for The Castle Rock School and The Newbridge School and Friday 8th January for Broom Leys)

We have also planned a slight change to our secondary provision from January to allow our students more access to specific lessons. Information regarding this will be sent home from each of our secondary schools early next week.

Finally, I hope you and your families remain safe and healthy over Christmas.

Here's to a brighter, healthier and more positive 2021 that brings an end to self-isolation, tiers and lockdown!

With my very best wishes



Julia Patrick

CEO The Apollo Partnership Trust

Secondary Executive Headteacher, The Castle Rock School and The Newbridge School