

Hello everyone! I hope you have all had a great Christmas break, although I know for most of us this year's festivities have been a bit different.

I will be writing to you all again during the first week of term to introduce myself properly. What I will say for now is that I am really excited to be joining Old Earth as Headteacher. It is a very special school and through my previous working relationship with the school and Paul Reynolds, and my recent work with staff and governors I know I will be working with an excellent team who are completely focussed on providing all our children with the best educational provision possible.

When I was offered the Headship post the country was going into the first national lockdown. As time went by the Governors at Old Earth, Bolton Brow, Paul and I felt that it was appropriate to delay the transition for a further term. This was the right thing to do for both communities and both schools have had successful transition periods where they opened more widely to some children in June/July and then fully in September. We were all hopeful that by the start of 2021 we would be returning to 'normal' school. Sadly, this has not been the case but what I experienced at Old Earth last term really impressed me. The school was operating at full capacity with COVID-19 measures in place and the children were happy and confident in their classrooms and around school in their year group bubbles. The staff have worked incredibly hard in challenging circumstances to make the learning environment engaging, fun and as safe as it possibly can be, and Mr Reynolds and Mrs Dixon have told me how magnificent you have all been in supporting all the operational measures that the staff team have needed to implement.

Over the past few weeks you may have seen media coverage relating to COVID-19 testing in schools. Most, if not all of this has focussed on staff and children in Secondary schools. However, all Primary school staff in the Calderdale area can now access a 'lateral flow test' on a regular basis. Many of the staff team will be in school on Sunday 3rd January to take a test. The aim of the testing is to reduce the risk of transmitting covid-19 between adults and from adults to children. **Please note, there will not be any testing children in Primary schools.** I must thank Mrs Dixon and the team for agreeing to do this in advance of the start of the new term. It has further highlighted to me the level of commitment that this group of staff has to the children, their families and each other. Tests will be carried out on weekly basis for all staff who agree to take part in this trial.

You may have all seen the latest Covid-19 update from the Government and what this means for schools from January. I am pleased to inform you that **school reopens on Monday 4th January 2021** and I am looking forward to meeting you and the children on the playground before and after school. Mrs Dixon and I wanted to remind you of the school procedures for returning to school. These have not changed dramatically since the end of last term and the 'parent checklist' is available on the school website and attached to this email as a reminder for everyone. The only change relates to winter weather conditions. We are expecting very cold conditions and possibly snow in the week ahead. Please can we ask that your child comes dressed appropriately for the weather as they will be spending time outside and all areas of the building will continue to be ventilated in line with our covid-19 risk assessment. An extra layer of clothing, a warm winter coat, gloves and appropriate winter footwear are strongly recommended. Can we also ask that you take your time entering and leaving the school site in the icy conditions, we want everyone to have a safe and happy start to the new year. All the best for 2021 everyone!

Yours sincerely

Dan Burns (Headteacher)

