

**Royal Borough of Kingston
Guildhall High Street
Kingston-upon-Thames KT1
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1 September 2020

Dear parents and carers,

As the school holidays draw to a close, we hope you have managed to have some time to rest and enjoy what has been a very different summer for everyone. We know the last few months have been a challenging time for many families across our borough.

As we approach the start of the new school term, all children and young people will now be expected to be back in school. Attendance is no longer optional. We support this approach and want to reassure you that our schools have been working incredibly hard to enable this to happen.

While coronavirus has not gone away and we all still have an important role to play in protecting ourselves and each other by following the health and hygiene guidance, our children must not lose out anymore. School is now the best place for them to be to continue their educational and social development.

Our schools have been working tirelessly over the summer to put in place their plans to welcome back your children, in line with detailed national guidance issued by the Government. The brochure enclosed with this letter sets out the changes undertaken to help protect you and your children.

We are hugely thankful to our headteachers and their teams of dedicated staff for all the time and effort they have put into these preparations. Their commitment to making our schools as safe as they can possibly be has been unwavering and we, along with our colleagues at Achieving for Children, are extremely grateful for all they have done.

We understand these are unprecedented times and that you may have some worries or concerns about the new school term. But we want to reassure you that we are confident our schools are doing everything they can to keep your children safe. Our Public Health team is monitoring the local Covid-19 situation on a daily basis and has worked closely with schools and Achieving for Children to put in place robust plans to deal with any issues, should they arise.

In Kingston, the level of confirmed cases remains relatively low and our testing figures are higher than the national average, which means you are continuing to do your bit to protect our borough from Covid-19. The NHS Test and Trace service is reaching above average numbers of contacts for confirmed cases across Kingston.

While we must all remain vigilant as things can change quickly, we are very grateful for all you are doing. You can continue to play your part by following national guidance on regular hand washing, social distancing and wearing face coverings. To keep up to date with the latest local news around Covid-19, you can sign up to our Kingston Council newsletter at www.kingston.gov.uk/rbknewsletter

We want to thank our schools, as well as you and your children, for all you have done to support each other and keep each other safe. We know it has been a very challenging time, but it has also brought out the very best in our community, and we will come through this together.

Best wishes,

Councillor Caroline Kerr

Leader of Kingston Council

Councillor Diane White Portfolio Holder
for Children's Services including
Education