



RE: Weekly update 16/07/21

Dear parent carers

I hope that this update finds you well.

This is my final update, and even as I begin to write this, it still does not yet seem real that I am moving on! My connection with Severndale is long standing as my first special school I had ever taught at where I developed my passion to enable our children and young people with SEND to be fully included in our society; shaping a better future that they aspire and look forward to.

I then left, and after 4 years, I faithfully returned to Severndale as Principal. These last 5 and a half years have been a complete honour. Working with our children and young people has been such an inspiration as they surprise us every day with what they achieve and continue to strive for. I have also had the pleasure of meeting and speaking with many of you, as partners to further develop our wonderful school. I have learnt so much about your lived experiences and those of your families as you navigate a system that is so imperfect.

I have also been extremely privileged to lead the most dedicated and committed team that I could ever have wished for. They have demonstrated repeatedly the meaning of teamwork and determination in achieving shared goals for our pupils. I have no doubt that they will continue to always strive for more to maximise opportunities for our children and young people.

I will miss Severndale deeply, but it will always hold a very special place in my heart.

The situation this week

- I am happy to confirm that last week's positive Lateral Flow Test (LFT) case, tested negative in their PCR test, therefore we were able to welcome back isolated pupils and staff with a sigh of relief!
- This week we were notified of another 2 unrelated positive Lateral Flow Test (LFT) results, from a different department to last week's case. 1 of these bubbles has re-opened following a negative PCR test, and the other remains closed as we await the results of a PCR test and have our fingers tightly crossed for good news.
- We have had news from LCT Education Welfare Officer that Severndale is ending the year 7% higher than the national average for attendance to special schools, at 84%, for this highly disrupted academic year. In the years just prior to Covid-19 lockdowns, we were reaching 93-94% attendance, which was also well above the national average.

Summer support and information booklet

Please find attached a booklet filled with support services that you may find useful if your circumstances change over the 6-week break. Themes within the booklet are informed by safeguarding data collected over the course of the term from incidences and situations that have been brought to our attention. Currently, big issues are child and adult mental health, however we have recently identified a rising number of young people who are exploring their sexuality, and therefore we have included a double page spread of services that support gender identity and sexual orientation. Please email our Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) lorna.matley@severndaleacademy.co.uk or michelle.hill@severndaleacademy.co.uk if you would like any further support or information.



A message from the new Principal, Brian Thomas:



Hello to all pupils, families and friends of Severndale Academy. My name is Brian Thomas and I am excited and proud to be the next principal of Severndale. I have had the privilege of working with young people with special educational needs for over 20 years and am driven and passionate about ensuring that young people with EHCP's leave school prepared for life and also leave school being as independent as they possibly can be. I am a strong believer that success for our young people is made more powerful by working collaboratively with families and other agencies and I am looking forward to working with you all as the new academic year begins. Before September I will post a video on the website telling you more about me and also then in the new term I will send out a family's survey so that I can find out more about you and your views. In the meantime I would just like to wish Sabrina every success in her new role, wish all Severndale families a pleasant summer and then look forward to starting the new term with the pupils on Monday September 6th.

Thank you and farewell!

As one chapter closes, another chapter opens for us all. It has been good to get to know Brian over the last few weeks as he has spent a good amount of time in school to meet with key staff and gain an understanding of Severndale. I wish him and the LCT my very best wishes in taking Severndale from strength to strength.

Finally, I would like to thank our children and young people, families, governors past and present, our wider network of partners, and all my colleagues for your generous support, knowledge and kindness that you have given to me over the years. I will take away fond memories and a feeling of warmth and pride of all that we have achieved and overcome. Thank you.

Wishing you all a safe and happy summer and every success for the future,

Sabrina Hobbs
Principal