

3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you to all parents for their understanding and support at this difficult time. We will try to keep in touch with parents via letters and phone calls but please do check our website [www.danesgatecommunity.org.uk](http://www.danesgatecommunity.org.uk) regularly as this will be my most reliable way of keeping you informed about what is happening in school.

As everyone already knows, I retire from being Headteacher at Danesgate on 19.4.20. Thank you so much for all the kind words that have been sent through to me since I announced that I was leaving in my December 2019 letter. It has been my privilege to serve the young people who have attended Danesgate since April 2010. I am extremely proud of the Danesgate staff and the journey we have travelled together. Danesgate really is a wonderful and unique setting. I am confident that the Danesgate staff, old and new, will continue to uphold its values and promote the ethos of care that is central to our work.

I am delighted to confirm that Mark Richardson (currently Deputy Head of Hall Cliffe School) will join Danesgate as Headteacher at the end of May. I am very happy to announce that Chris Nichols will be Acting Headteacher for the first half of next term. I know Chris will continue to work tirelessly on behalf of all Danesgate's pupils and parents and he will be very ably supported in this by the whole staff team.

Gareth Morton is also leaving at the end of this term. Gareth has been appointed as Headteacher of The Rubicon in Selby and I wish him every happiness in his new role. Sarah McKinley (currently Assistant Headteacher) will become Acting Deputy Headteacher from 20.4.20. Gareth is the pastoral Deputy Head and also the lead for any safeguarding or child protection issues. In order to ensure that this critical role is covered, Cath Norris (previously Deputy Headteacher at Danesgate and known to many families already) is returning on a part-time, temporary basis as Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Any new appointments will wait until the new headteacher is in post.

## Covid-19 update

### **What is the current Government guidance?**

The Government up-date their guidance on a daily basis. There is a live link to the Government's Coronavirus page on our school website. I have also put a copy of the full guidance to schools as at 27.3.20 on the website for everyone. The Government continue to ask parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend. The first aim of the partial school closure measures set out by the Secretary of State for Education is to reduce the overall population of children moving around local areas as far as possible, in order to further reduce the number of social interactions and thus flatten the upward curve of the COVID-19 outbreak. However, the second aim is to continue to care for children who are vulnerable, or whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response, so that they can continue to work where alternative childcare arrangements cannot be made.

### **What does this mean for your son or daughter at Danesgate?**

We continue to be open every day for those pupils who need to attend and are eligible for provision according to the Government's rules. We are currently opening 4 out of our 5 sites as needed. The primary Kestrel groups have reduced from 3 to 2 sites. We have a Y1-3 group running at our KS1 setting in Bishopthorpe. We have a Y4-6 group running at our Kestrel House setting at Poppleton Road Primary School. The Kestrel Secondary base at York High School is still running but may have to be relocated to Danesgate's Fulford site in the future. We will consult with parents of pupils in Kestrel Secondary if we find this does become the only sustainable way to manage that provision.

Every parent and carer will be contacted each week by their son or daughter's key worker either by phone or email. This is an opportunity to check how everyone is and to talk through additional provision needed for pupils who meet the Government's criteria. This allows parents to discuss plans with key workers and make decisions about the support they need on a rolling basis.

Your son or daughter's key worker will also check there is sufficient school work to do at home. There are different ways we are getting school work to pupils:

- Work packs being delivered home by our drivers or sent through the post
- Work being emailed direct to parental email addresses
- Phone calls from teachers to parental phones to go through work with pupils
- Bramble – Danesgate teachers have set up virtual classrooms. If they have work in their Bramble classroom they will email you an invite link to enter the classroom. Once in the classroom pupils can find work left by their teacher and also have lessons over an audio link with their teacher. Bramble does have video conferencing facilities but we are not going to use the camera option. We have trialled it with a few pupils recently and majority have fed back that they prefer the talking option only. Also schools are being advised against using video conferencing by professional associations at present.
- My Maths – all pupils have their own My Maths log in. Your son or daughter's key worker or Maths teacher will explain to you how to use this if you do not know already. This is a really good tool which allows your son or daughter to do Maths at their level and their teacher can mark their work.
- Learning web-sites. We have set up links on our school website to the learning web-sites we have chosen for our setting. Just click on the link and access the activities.

### **My son or daughter is eligible for free school meals – how do I get food or vouchers?**

If your son or daughter is on site (either on the Danesgate campus or one of our Kestrel bases) they will have a hot meal. For pupils at home we have been delivering food and vouchers to the home. We will continue to deliver vouchers to you, £15 per week in value. The Government has set up a link for all schools to order vouchers direct from the supermarkets (up till now we have had to go in person to buy them in bulk). This new system is not fully up and running as yet but as soon as it is we will let you know how it is going to work.

### **My son or daughter is hoping to do their SATS or complete their GCSEs this year – what is happening about this?**

The nationwide SATs and GCSE exams are cancelled. Information has been received today about how the exam boards plan to collect grades from teachers. There is no additional information about the SATS as yet but there is a letter from Ofqual (who lead on examinations) on the school website that pupils who are in their final GCSE year may wish to read.

### **My son or daughter is getting very anxious about a lot of things at present. Is there any more help I can access?**

We appreciate that you may already have your own health and social care professionals to get advice from. However, we have put some emotional well-being resources on our school website and links to specialist providers. We are also working on well-being activities as part of our general provision offer. We appreciate that many of our pupils have significant emotional and mental health issues and need specialist support. We have been liaising with the Local Authority and local CAMHS colleagues on this. We understand that CAMHS are working on an additional advice line but they also want us to remind everyone that the CAMHS single point of access link ([tewv.camhsspaysorkselby@nhs.net](mailto:tewv.camhsspaysorkselby@nhs.net)) and the CRISIS help line (<https://www.tewv.nhs.uk/services/crisisadvice> or ring 01904 526582 ) are operating as normal if you need to contact them.

Thank you to everyone for all their support and encouragement at this time. We will keep the web-site up-dated on a daily basis. Please don't hesitate to ring school or email your son or daughter's key worker if you are anxious about anything or have any queries or concerns. My email address is [tricia.head@york.gov.uk](mailto:tricia.head@york.gov.uk) if you need to contact me or [chris.nichols@york.gov.uk](mailto:chris.nichols@york.gov.uk) for Chris who takes over from me on 20.4.20.

Sincerely yours,



Tricia Head  
Headteacher