



27 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Joining the Wessex Learning Trust

These are uncertain times and I thank you for following the evolving government guidance to mitigate the impact of Covid-19. In particular, thank you for respecting instructions from our schools which allow them to comply and support key workers in this unprecedented situation. Our Headteachers, senior leaders and, indeed, all staff have had to make difficult decisions around the intent of government advice, the education of our children, and their own personal health and circumstances. This has not been easy and I am grateful for their ongoing commitment.

It is during times like this that we appreciate the strength of community and collaboration.

Following considerable discussion and consultation, the Mendip Edge Federation Governing Body has agreed that our four schools in Cheddar First School, Draycott & Rodney Stoke First School, Fairlands Middle School and Shipham First School will join the Wessex Learning Trust on 1 April 2020. This is a decision which was made diligently and prior to escalation of the coronavirus restrictions. We believe it is in the best long term interests of the schools, affording the best opportunities and education for pupils across the Cheddar Valley now and into the future.

The Wessex Learning Trust is a multi academy trust, already comprising nine schools in and around the Cheddar Valley – from pre-schools onwards to first, primary, middle and upper schools. There's a strong synergy between our organisations and this formal collaboration will allow us to expand the benefits of working together. Input from consultation with the whole school communities has been crucial to inform the decision and we are committed to retaining the individual character of each school as we move forward.

Whilst the final decision was only made by governors shortly before the Government announced schools across the UK should close, the timetable for potential transfer has been working towards this 1 April target date for several months. All parties agree now that it is most sensible to complete the transfer as scheduled, allowing us to work more closely together through the prevailing situation and look to the future when schools reopen.

So what will change? In reality, you will see very little change when the schools return. Timings of the school day will be the same, your child(ren) will continue to wear their uniform with pride and ... as long as it's before the summer holidays ... will have the same timetable of lessons with the same teachers. The differences will be in the background and over the longer term – things like the quality of support services, the finances of the school, streamlining of policies and software, shared teacher training, curriculum building and the smooth transition for children between schools as they grow up.



Fairlands Middle School

Masons Way, Cheddar, Somerset, BS27 3PG, Tel: (01934) 743186 Fax: (01934) 744457 Absence Line: (01934) 743908
E-Mail: office@fairlandsmiddleschool.co.uk Website: www.fairlandsmiddleschool.co.uk

Headteacher: Stefan McHale
Deputy Headteachers: Helen Heffernan and Kate Persaud
Associate Leaders: Robert Cooling and Matthew Vincent SENDCo

Safeguarding Children is everyone's responsibility.

If you are worried about any child please make an appointment to see either Helen Heffernan, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Robert Cooling, Felicity Grant, Sally Virgin, Designated Safeguarding Deputies
Alternatively, you can phone NPSCC: 0808 800 5000 Somerset Direct: 0300 123 2224



Fairlands Middle School

Caring and Inspirational



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Our local governing body will remain in place to oversee the transition and into the future. Indeed, if you would be interested in joining us and taking a more direct role in the school we'd be interested to hear from you ... especially if you have professional or educational skills to offer.

Finally, I ask that you share this information with other parents. It's obviously not been possible to share paper copies of the letter in the normal manner and I am conscious that not every parent will reliably receive the electronic updates.

Thank you for your continued support for our fantastic schools.

Yours faithfully,

Adrian Warman
Chair of Governors



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