

Essex County Council
Education
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Dear School Leaders, Teachers and all school Staff,

As we come to the end of this school year, we can only reflect on the fact that there has never been a year like this before and I am sure we all hope that will never be another like it again. It is too simple to say that the Covid-19 Pandemic has brought challenges the like of which we have never seen but from my point of view we have to look at the way that schools and staff have reacted to the constantly changing guidance, the uncertainty for individuals, families and communities generally with concerns about the health and safety of both ourselves and others. All I can do is express my admiration at the way the teaching profession have risen to these challenges and battled through any personal fears and concerns with the single intention to ensure the education, wellbeing and futures of the children and young people we all serve.

I should also like to mention our Director of Education, Clare Kershaw and her team who I know have worked tirelessly over the last four months to trawl through mountains of information from Government, disseminate the details and pass that on to school leaders to assist in the constantly evolving decisions you have all had to make. I am sure you will join me in applauding what they have done.

However, we now must look to the future and in September there is an expectation that all children should be back in school. This will bring new challenges in providing the curriculum so that children are not disadvantaged, maintaining social distancing and the safety of all in schools and obviously exercising that new educational requirement "Bubbles". All of this will bring new pressures to ensure that the time lost to children in the early years does not leave a permanent scar on their future; that those children moving between years 6 and 7 are properly supported through that process; that young people in those critical GCSE and A-level years do not miss out and the overarching need to ensure that the hopes and aspirations for young people's careers and futures are not thwarted.

Anyway, that is for the future but for the summer I hope you all have the opportunity to get a well-deserved break and come back in September "Match Fit" for the new school year.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Ray Gooding
Lead Member for Education and Skills