

Dear Residents,

As we begin 2022, I want to express my full appreciation of our schools and the role they continue to play in supporting children and young people in Hounslow throughout the pandemic. I am immensely proud of the way our heads and their teams have gone above and beyond in their efforts to keep our children's education on track.

We know that in the coming weeks that schools are likely to experience the impact of Covid and other winter illnesses. Whilst they will be working hard to remain open and safe, they will also be following the latest guidance and continually risk assessing their activities and the school environment. Potential staff shortages means that there may be times when schools are no longer able to provide face to face education safely, and therefore decisions might need to be taken that lead to class, year group or even whole school learning moving online. These decision will never be taken lightly and the public health and education teams at Hounslow will work closely with any schools facing this situation. This will only be done where all other options have been explored and will only happen for the shortest time possible. I do not want any children missing any more time in school than is absolutely necessary.

I ask parents to be understanding of the difficult position schools are in at this time and be supportive of the actions schools are taking. The Department of Education are aware of the issues around staff absence and although they are monitoring the position nationally as schools return following the Christmas holidays, I remain frustrated at the government's lack of concrete and practical solutions.

We recognise the impact the pandemic has had and how challenging it has been on everyone. We thank you for your patience and support, for our schools and children, both in the classroom and at home.

Kind regards,

Cllr Tom Bruce