



COUNCILLOR IAN WARD
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
COUNCIL HOUSE
VICTORIA SQUARE
BIRMINGHAM
B1 1BB

Tel: 0121 464 4000

Email: Ian.Ward@birmingham.gov.uk

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Dear parents/carers

We know how challenging remote education is for families and how disappointed many pupils are that they aren't able to attend school in person at the moment.

As you know, Birmingham's schools worked hard during the autumn term to keep the disruption to your children's education to an absolute minimum. While it was far from a normal autumn term in any school, we were proud with the way schools in Birmingham remained open in the face of growing cases in the city before the Christmas break.

Schools are committed to improving outcomes for children and nobody is more disappointed than school staff that most pupils are not currently able to attend. However, the seriousness of the pandemic means that unfortunately most pupils do need to be at home at the moment.

Schools are striving to make remote education as good as it can be, incorporating best practice as set out by Ofsted on its website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whats-working-well-in-remote-education>).

They have quickly set up programmes of work, even though primary schools were given less than 24 hours' notice of closure at the start of January. Mass remote learning is new for everyone and has challenges that schools have never experienced before. Schools will be adapting as time goes on and learning from what works well and what can be improved as well as focussing on pupils' safety at this time.

It is clear that shortfalls in computer equipment and problems with connectivity mean that some pupils are struggling to access remote learning and we have written to the Education Secretary to highlight this digital divide, calling on him to urgently address this gap in provision, to help our young people recover any ground lost during the pandemic.

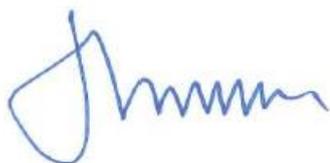
We are also supporting the Digital Education Partnership's campaign for more devices and connectivity for Birmingham children and young people and have been proud to see how individuals and businesses have rallied round on this issue.

In closing, we want to thank you for supporting your children's schools at this challenging time and we hope that life in our schools will return to normal as soon as possible.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Ward', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Ian Ward
Leader of Birmingham City Council

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jayne Francis', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Jayne Francis
Cabinet Member for Education, Skills & Culture