

Dear year 6 family

As you enter your final year of primary school we, as your local secondary school Headteachers recognise that your decision making process and transition to secondary is going to look very different this year in light of the current Covid -19 pandemic. Across all our schools we have tried to ensure we continue to offer the experiences to children, though delivered in a different way, that they would have had prior to the closing of school buildings and lockdown rules.

This term you would have expected to be visiting a range of schools to decide where you would like to continue the next phase of your education. Due to the Covid-19 guidelines all educational establishments have to follow, Open Days will not be possible this year in the form they usually take. This saddens us all - both as Headteachers and as parents ourselves.

You will be aware that secondary schools have to identify 'bubbles' in which groups of students now learn. Many of your primary schools have had to follow the same structure. Schools are also not allowed to accept visitors on site and with the hundreds of children in the current year 6 across the area, it would be impossible to manage any visits without breaking guidelines and risking significant cross transmission across bubbles and therefore into each and every school across the area. Our absolute priority is the safety of the young people of South Somerset and their families.

However, all four schools across Yeovil and Huish Episcopi just outside of Yeovil, are committed to giving you as 'real' an experience of Open Day as possible and an opportunity to see and learn about our schools. Over the summer we have met to agree how we can present our schools to you in the Autumn to replace the usual visits.

Each of the schools will be producing a video or short film to replace open evening and the tours you may have undertaken. All these videos will be released onto school websites and social media pages on the 1st October – the same time as the first of the school Open events would have been taking place. In addition schools will have their prospectus available on their website for you. Schools will also be arranging conversations with local special educational needs coordinators in primary schools to ensure any students with particular needs highlighted on an education, health and care plan are able to gather further information in relation to the specific needs highlighted in their plan. Huish Episcopi will release their video on the 16th September as this has already been advertised.

We know that this could never fully replace the Open Day experience but we are sure you will all understand the difficulty and impossibility of holding events in our schools whilst also maintaining the safety of the families in our area by meeting guidelines set out for schools.

The deadline for submission of secondary school application forms is the 31st October. This is an online process which your child's primary school will be able to provide details of but which you can also find on the County Council website. <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/secondary-admissions-guide/>

We hope you will find the videos an informative and effective replacement for Open Evenings and look forward to working with you and your families in the future.

Yours sincerely



Bucklers Mead Academy



Westfield Academy



Preston School



Huish Episcopi



Stanchester Academy