



15 October 2020

Dear Parents, Carers & Staff of Rosebery School

As Chair of the School Standards Board, and on behalf of all governors, I would like to convey some of the Board's thoughts on how we have seen the entire Rosebery community respond to the most significant crisis in most of our living memories.

Back in March (which now seems a lifetime ago) we saw our schools close and most of us being confined to home. It was unprecedented for our children to spend so long away from their normal learning and for us as parents and carers to grapple with the challenge of home schooling. In those early days we had very little direction from the government and local authorities. The school took a proactive approach to enable digital online work, as much of possible, assisting those families not fortunate enough to have suitable devices for all of their children. It was alien for the teaching body, who not only had the same parental challenges in many cases, but also had to adapt their delivery away from well-practised routines with close interaction. We got through that initial phase, adapting the workload, which many students found challenging and ensured we stayed in as much contact as possible for pastoral care. We looked forward to being able to return in some way to the physical school.

To say that government policy has been fluid is probably the understatement of the year. I saw the school Leadership Team spend many hours adapting, or drawing up, plans from scratch only for them to be torn up when the government made a late change to policy. For every plan communicated to parents and carers there at least three redundant ones in a bin somewhere. Somehow, we managed a limited return for the key years facing exams in 2021. Those students whose exams were cancelled have been on a wholly unnecessary rollercoaster of emotions. Thankfully, the vast majority of those have ultimately gone onto their places of choice for the next phase of education. We still have no idea how similarly the current academic year will ultimately play out and that means more frustration and uncertainty.

As your local Governing Board, we have been working with the Trust and the local authorities to support the school where we can. Our remit, to uphold standards, challenge and support school leadership, remains the same but we have had to adapt our own approach, given the changing circumstances. We have already discussed how that might look this academic year and what potential scenarios the school faces on everything from external exams to more lockdowns and how we engage parents and carers.

We would like to extend our thanks to all the staff body for stepping up to this great challenge with professionalism. Particular thanks go to the Facilities team. Gary and his whole staff have done a tremendous job through the summer and autumn, adapting and preparing the buildings for the new processes.

We would also like to thank all parents and carers for being understanding and supporting of the school in delivering RoseberyRemote and the return to school. There was never going to be a perfect solution and your patience has been appreciated. The challenges remain and we will continue to engage with you as much as we possibly can. I am sure many of you now have a better understanding of how difficult it is to deliver education.

Finally, we are acutely aware that there is a huge mental health challenge for us all. It has been difficult for everyone and 12-18 is already a very emotionally charged time for our growing daughters. Please take care of yourselves and be sensitive to others. Seek help if you need it, before it is too late. Surrey Children's Services, in particular, are very stretched and underperforming, but that should not deter you. Remember how we had a seismic shift in a selfless attitude to others during lockdown, after years of a somewhat more "Me First" society. We can get through these challenges together with a positive attitude.

Best regards, on behalf of the whole SSB.



**Rob Mayo**

Chair of School Standards Board



**SSB Members**

Peter Dunbar

Sarah Ayers

Silke Elvery

Sharon Stead