



5 November 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

I hope you and all your loved ones are safe and well and coping with the challenges of the pandemic as best as you can. Please can I reiterate that our school is a key part of the community and as such we are here to support you and your families should you need it, to the best of our abilities. I have been touched by the generosity of local businesses and parents in our attempt to raise funds for our campus and support for what we are trying to do, it's been amazing.

Following the announcement at the weekend regarding the national lockdown, the DFE have now published their guidance for schools late yesterday. This can be read in full here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-and-childcare-settings-new-national-restrictions-from-5-november-2020#ooss>

As our measures have been more robust than had been required in previous guidance there are no new significant measures that we need to put in place. In essence the country has now come in line with what we have already actioned since the start of term.

Face coverings have become a stronger focus and it is vital all students have these upon arrival to school or if using public transport and service buses. Students who are exempt from wearing a face covering on medical grounds will be provided with a pass to show staff and avoid unnecessary challenge from their peers. Students will be reminded of the need to have face coverings during Tutor time and where students repeatedly forget they will be issued with a standards sanction "pink slip" just as they would if they frequently forgot other essential kit.

It also highlights the importance of parents and other visitors not coming on site unless essential but if they do to always wear a face covering.

Given the significant increase in cases nationally and locally, combined with the shielding of clinically extremely vulnerable groups again, we are facing a very real staffing crisis. At the time of writing I have 12 teaching staff isolating and several support staff too. To address we are doing the following:

- Staff are being used to cover in their PPA (planning, preparation and assessment) time
- Any spare capacity is being used
- Part time staff are coming in on days off
- Support staff and SLT are covering lessons
- Agency staff are being used, but it has proved a real challenge to get people when needed in this current climate, nor can we afford to pay 12 agency staff long term

The above steps cannot be maintained should the position deteriorate any further and we would need to consider collapsing a bubble and asking that students work from home as previously communicated in our Contingency Plan. Using the rationale outlined before this would be Year 9 in the first instance.

Some lessons are already being delivered live from staff isolating with another member of staff present in the room. This is a new approach that we will review but we want to, where possible ensure continuity of specialist input by their normal teacher. Depending on individual circumstances this is not always possible.

This clearly is not a decision we would take lightly but I have to balance the need to educate with the safe and effective running of the campus and we are reaching a critical point. I hope this can be avoided but please be assured if this step is taken it is the very last resort and a direct impact of the pandemic.

We have also found it difficult over the course of this week to meet statutory needs of all EHCP plans, as staff have had to be used to keep the school open. I hope that the parents of our SEND students appreciate the very real challenges we are under and that we will always continue to do our best to meet the needs of your child but this is proving incredibly difficult.

As times are so uncertain at the moment we have also taken the hard decision that we will not be arranging any enrichment, visits or trips either in the UK and abroad for the foreseeable future. This is a situation we will monitor closely in the months ahead and as soon as we feel it is safe to do so, we will look at again.

Should you have any questions about the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Teece', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Will Teece
Headteacher