



Dear parent carers

11th December 2020

RE: Weekly Update

Covid-19 impact this week

I hope my weekly update finds you all well. This week, of the 50 bubbles across the academy there have been:

- 0 class bubbles needing to isolate due to positive cases.
- 4 class, and 1 admin bubbles returned after 14 days isolation following positive cases in previous weeks.
- 5 class bubbles isolated and returned after negative test results.
- 1 class closed and reopened due to teacher absence.
- 1 transport bubble remains isolated, awaiting test results.

Safeguarding update

On the 11th November a large number of staff participated in an external audit carried out by Telford and Wrekin Local Authority (LA) Safeguarding Team. The conclusion of the most recent review of safeguarding stated:

“In our view, the academy have made rapid progress in addressing weaknesses identified by Ofsted. Evidence that was presented to us does indicate that children are safe. While we have identified areas where compliance could continue to be tightened and where the culture can continue to be embedded, we found evidence of effective safeguarding practice. We also identified key strengths in relation to safeguarding, including the role of the newly appointed DSL's, safeguarding record keeping, safer recruitment arrangements and compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.”
Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding team.

We are extremely pleased that the work and efforts of the staff to improve and drive developments forwards has been recognised, and we continue to be focused on becoming a flagship school for safeguarding excellence.

Context of the Ofsted safeguarding inspection

We recognise that there will be questions regarding confidence in how Severndale came to receive the Ofsted safeguarding report in the first place and the robustness of measures put in place to avoid future reoccurrences. Please find below our reflections of how we address key aspects to ensure stability and quality as we move onwards in line with our Post-Ofsted Action Plan:

- We believe that joining LCT, will provide sustainable support and rigour to the organisational structure. Severndale will be part of a family of schools rather than continue as a standalone academy.
- We have reviewed and updated our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures to ensure that they encompass all areas of change and localised areas of focus. This also reflects the recent updates to government policy; in Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2020.
- There is a greater focus from all partners to develop a multi-agency approach to working together to keep children safe, to ensure good outcomes for children and young people.
- The appointment of 2 new Lead DSLs enables our very large and diverse special school of 410 pupils and 280 staff, to be split into manageable sections of school with strong leadership.
- The addition of all 6 department leads joining the DSL team enables a robust and bespoke approach and a stable structure for succession planning.

Page 1/2 (cont'd.../...)



Parent Council meeting update

On Tuesday 8/12/20 the newly formed Severndale Parent Carer Council met. It was great to see some additional members to this core group of parent carers which are representative across Semi-Formal and Formal departments. Please let us know if you are interested in joining us for future meetings as we would ideally like to see a cross section of school represented. Areas we agreed to take forward in the meeting included:

- Class group weekly updates – Some classes already do this, but we will look to develop this model across the academy in a consistent way.
- Parent carer online SEND conference – This idea is still in development; the idea is to open up online parent carer and staff SEND workshops, forums and training over the course of the week to maximise accessibility. Please look out for a parent carer survey to let us know what you are interested in.
- Development of a communication strategy – following feedback from parent carers and staff.

Christmas cards and gifts

To ensure safe handling and delivery of Christmas cards and gifts, we would like the last day of Christmas cards and gifts to come into school to be next Monday 14/12/20. These will be 'quarantined' by class staff and given out to pupils on Thursday/ Friday to take home. We thank you for your support and understanding with this.

End of term DfE announcement

You may have already heard about the Department for Education's announcement (this week) setting out their agreement for enabling schools to have a PD day on the last day of term (next week!). Along with other schools in the county, we felt that this was incredibly short notice and would cause even further disruption to an already challenging term for families and our children and young people.

Therefore, I would like to confirm that we will remain open to pupils as normal, all the way to the end of term.

Arrangements for notifying school of positive Covid-19 test results in the holidays

In next week's Weekly Update, I will let you know of our plans for communicating any Covid-19 positive test results that are confirmed during the school holidays, as we will continue to support Public Health track and trace.

Thank you for your efforts, positivity and support this term. As the Christmas holidays approaches, we know that this will not be an easy time for many of our families. To support your child/young person being off school for 2 weeks, we will develop a support package to help families. Please let us know if you have specific ideas/ requests of what would help communication, de-escalation/ regulation, and identify general phone numbers of agencies that can help you if your needs change while school is closed.

I hope that you have found this update informative and helpful, but if you have further questions or ideas to share, please email me to let me know: sabrina.hobbs@severndaleacademy.co.uk. I hope that you have a rested and enjoyable weekend.

Kind regards

Sabrina