

25 September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

The news of recent national and local restrictions following the rise of positive Covid 19 tests has added further uncertainty to these very difficult times. It is the intention of the government to keep schools open and as you are aware we have put a wide range of measures in place to ensure our schools are as safe as they can be. You can read the specific school plan and risk assessment for your child's school by visiting the school website. We keep these plans under constant review, and we have tweaked some aspects of the measures since the start of term.

It is now over three full weeks since the start of the academic year. All of our schools report that the children and young people are delighted to be back and that their attitude to their studies is excellent. They have understood and adapted to the new routines very quickly indeed.

Positive Cases

Unfortunately, we have now had a small number of positive Covid-19 tests, across three of the eight trust schools. We follow the Public Health process once informed of a positive case, immediately contacting anyone who has had close contact, to explain the procedure for self isolation. The decision to determine who should self isolate and whether a particular cohort should all self- isolate is directed by the local Public Health team, to ensure we isolate the correct people and contain the spread of the virus within the school. The criteria for these decisions is [here](#). A number of the positive cases developed once students were in self isolation at home and had not been on the school premises for several days.

The positive cases to date amount to approximately 0.05% of our student population. Whilst the rate of infection within the community has increased recently, our schools in comparison remain very safe places due to the range of control measures that are in place.

Communication

We inform the parents of those children affected and who need to self isolate immediately by letter - the same day, including at a weekend if necessary. Further information is sent to the wider school community to inform them of a

case, and reassure that their child has not been in close contact and should continue to attend as usual. We do not release any details which may lead to the identification of an individual who has tested positive, this is personal medical information which must not be disclosed and is protected by GDPR.

Attendance

Attendance at the start of September was excellent, with our schools reporting attendance levels of over 97%, demonstrating how pleased parents and students were to be back at school. Whilst attendance remains high for the majority of students, it has dipped for others. It is understandable that anxiety levels have risen following the rise in Covid-19 positive cases in the region and the decision to implement a number of local restrictions, however, good attendance remains vital. Please be reassured that our schools continue to work tirelessly to ensure as safe an environment as possible, and that the process for responding to any positive case is both prompt and robust. Good attendance remains a government requirement and is essential to ensure each and every child is able to fulfill their potential.

Remote Learning

Remote learning is in place for those students who have been asked to self isolate at home for a period of time. This will ensure they do not fall behind their peer group and that their time at home is meaningfully used. We have learned a lot about remote learning, since the original lockdown in March and we are well prepared should any future lockdown occur. Many teachers are now incorporating elements developed for remote learning into everyday classwork and homework strategies.

Parents Evenings

Whilst we cannot operate the usual face to face parents evening at the moment, the schools will be in contact with you to provide an opportunity to discuss your child's progress, in line with the usual parental evening schedule. This may be either a scheduled virtual meeting or a telephone call. Of course you can contact the school at any time, through the appropriate channels if you have any concerns.

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The return of children and young people to our schools and the resumption of formal teaching is a real positive, in these challenging times. It is a pleasure to see friends reconnecting with each other and with their teachers and to understand just how much students and staff have missed being in school. We will continue to do all we can to ensure the best possible educational and social experience for your child. Thank you for the many notes of thanks and support sent to staff across the Trust, they are very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Mr S Taylor
CEO