

13th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

This is the first time I have written to you since the Prime Minister's broadcast on Sunday when he announced that a gradual reopening of schools would begin, if the scientific advice continues to support such a move, during the week beginning 1st June.

The motivation behind this move is clearly set out in the guidance for schools and it is one which I hope we can all support:

We want to get all children and young people back into education as soon as the scientific advice allows because it is the best place for them to learn, and because we know how important it is for their mental wellbeing to have social interactions with their peers, carers and teachers. Children returning to educational and childcare settings in greater numbers will also allow more families to return to work.

I will do everything I can to ensure that the Academy re-opens its doors to students as quickly as we safely can. At every stage, however, it is the safety of our students, staff and all their families that must be my paramount consideration. It is the detail of the gradual re-opening that will require careful planning.

On Monday, the Department for Education published guidance on reopening along with information for parents which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

In the schools' version of the guidance, the starting point is that:

From 1 June 2020, we expect that secondary schools and colleges will be able to offer some face to face contact with year 10 and year 12 pupils. This will not be a return to full timetables or pupils back in school or college full time, rather some support to supplement pupils' remote education. In line with implementing protective measures and reducing contacts, schools and colleges should limit the attendance of the year 10 and 12 cohort in the setting at any one time and to keep students in small groups as [set out in our guidance](#).

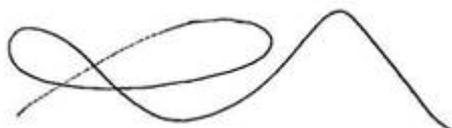
This week I will be meeting (virtually) with Academy colleagues, with fellow Headteachers and with governors to begin to work out the best way for the Academy to start to think through the detail of what this will mean for us. We also understand that the DfE will also be issuing further guidance later this week. In this email, therefore, I shall not be setting out detailed plans but I want, rather, to

draw your attention to the main features of the guidance and some of the broad implications for the Academy. In the table that follows, the text in bold is taken from the guidance, the text in italics spells out the implications for the Academy. Please note, I am not trying to cover the whole of the guidance- just to highlight what seem to be the key points that it raises.

<p>From 1st June secondary schools, sixth form, and further education colleges will begin some face to face support with year 10 and 12 pupils, although we do not expect these pupils to return on a full-time basis at this stage</p>	<p><i>For us the first stage of providing this support is likely to be a 1:1 tutorial session with each student to discuss their health and wellbeing, to take stock of their progress with remote learning and to identify any individual areas where support may be needed over the coming weeks. After that, the focus of this support, probably in small groups, will need to be on Maths, English and Science where almost six weeks of teaching time have already been lost.</i></p>
<p>All schools and childcare providers to continue to offer places to the priority groups – vulnerable children and children of critical workers – they have been supporting since the end of March</p>	<p><i>The number of these children in school has already begun to increase; all children in the vulnerable category in particular (ie those with EHC plans or a social worker are now “expected and encouraged” to attend. Please email lara.nolan@macclesfieldacademy.org if you would like a space for your child.</i></p>
<p>Approaches we are asking schools and other settings to take include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carrying out a risk assessment before opening to more children and young people - the assessment should directly address risks associated with coronavirus so that sensible measures can be put in place to minimise those risks for children, young people and staff 	<p><i>This is a challenge as the scientific evidence for assessing the risk is not yet clear. While it is generally accepted that children and young people are much less likely than adults to become seriously ill if they contract the virus, there is much less clarity on the likelihood of an infected child spreading the virus to an adult- either at home or in school. We will need to assume that transmission to other children or to adults is possible and take “sensible measures” accordingly. What we cannot do is guarantee that all these measures, however rigorously applied, will mean that nobody contracts the virus. In these circumstances, the sensible course would appear to be to start slowly and gradually build up our provision step by step.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making sure that children and young people do not attend if they or a member of their household has symptoms of coronavirus 	<p><i>We will take advice on appropriate forms of screening to carry out within the Academy. We will need students and families to be absolutely open with us if anyone in the household has a fever or a new, continuous cough. In such circumstances</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting regular hand washing for 20 seconds with running water and soap or use of sanitiser 	<p><i>We will maintain the handwashing requirements that have been in place for students throughout the closure period. Before re-opening we will ensure that we have sufficient supplies of hand washing products for all the staff and students in school.</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the catch it, bin it, kill it approach 	<p><i>It is essential that students are following these practices at home and always have tissues with them when they come in to school.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cleaning more frequently to get rid of the virus on frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles, handrails, tabletops, play equipment and toys 	<p><i>We are already working with our cleaning company to plan a new cleaning schedule which will focus on these surfaces and the rooms that are used on any given day.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> minimising contact through smaller classes or group sizes and altering the environment as much as possible, such as changing the layout of classrooms 	<p><i>When classes return we will work with reduced class sizes; in the first instance, the face to face contact is likely to be with individual students and small groups. We are already measuring classrooms and considering where furniture could be removed in order to assess possible class sizes based on physical distancing of at least 2m.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reducing mixing between groups through timetable changes, such as staggered break times or by introducing staggered drop-off and collection times 	<p><i>Once our first teaching groups return, we will implement an interim timetable designed to minimise mixing as well as providing meaningful education.</i></p>

I know that the gradual return to school will create mixed feelings for some parents, some students, and, indeed some staff. For most of us the strong desire to return to something closer to normality is tempered by an anxiety about the possible risks involved. For me, it does feel like a light at the end of the tunnel but I am acutely aware that we still have a good deal of tunnel to navigate our way through. Please rest assured that I shall have everybody's safety at the forefront of my mind at every step of the way. If there is any aspect of the beginning of a gradual return to school that you would like to discuss with me, please do not hesitate to get in touch.



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