

**Wed, 27 May 2020**

Dear Parents and Carers

In the week since I last wrote, a great deal has happened both in the Academy and beyond. I am afraid, therefore, that this will feel a bit more like a newsletter than some of my usual emails. Nonetheless, I want to start by acknowledging that, much as all the weeks seem to merge into one at the moment, this is half term week, and to wish all of you and your families the very best break that you can get in the circumstances. These are, indeed, strange times, and I hope all of you are continuing to keep well and stay positive.

The following boxes contain up to date information on:

- [Guidance for Secondary School Provision from 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020](#)
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### **Guidance for secondary school provision from 15 June 2020**

On 24 May the Prime Minister announced that secondary schools should plan on the basis that from the week commencing 15 June, they can invite year 10 and 12 pupils back into school for some face-to-face support with their teachers, subject to the government's 5 tests being met.

On 25<sup>th</sup> May the DfE published the [guidance for secondary schools](#).

The headlines include:

- Schools are able to have a **quarter of the year 10 and year 12 cohort** (for schools with sixth forms) in school at any one time.
- **Disadvantaged pupils or pupils who have not been engaging may attend more frequently** than others as long no more than a quarter are in school.
- **Secondary schools may plan to use rotas** but should avoid split day rotas within the same day.
- **Remote education should remain the predominant mode of education** of year 10 and year 12 pupils.

- Secondary schools who have made plans for pupils to return earlier in June should be amended to **commence from 15 June**.
- Schools should **ensure safe travel to school plans** are in place.
- **No other secondary school pupils will return at this time**. This position will be kept under review.

### The Academy response: The Rainbow School

Rainbows, as symbols of hope and positivity, are very much part of the national scene at the moment so our plans to implement the guidance above are based on the creation of a “Rainbow School” with effect from the week beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> June:

|                                                                                     |               |                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | School Green  | One quarter of Y10 (divided into three classes – Max 12)                                                     | Attending on Mondays and, for individuals and small groups in need of extra support, on Fridays (subject to overall maximum of 30)    |
|   | School Orange | One quarter of Y10 (divided into three classes – Max 12)                                                     | Attending on Tuesdays and, for individuals and small groups in need of extra support, on Fridays (subject to overall maximum of 30)   |
|  | School Violet | One quarter of Y10 (divided into three classes – Max 12)                                                     | Attending on Wednesdays and, for individuals and small groups in need of extra support, on Fridays (subject to overall maximum of 30) |
|  | School Indigo | One quarter of Y10 (divided into three classes – Max 12)                                                     | Attending on Thursdays and, for individuals and small groups in need of extra support, on Fridays (subject to overall maximum of 30)  |
|  | School Blue   | Vulnerable children and the children of key workers in YY 7-8                                                | Attending every day as required by parents                                                                                            |
|  | School Yellow | Vulnerable children and the children of key workers in YY9-11                                                | Attending every day as required by parents                                                                                            |
|  | School Red    | Students extracted from other coloured “schools” for educational, medical, pastoral or disciplinary support. | As required- may often be empty                                                                                                       |

In the week beginning 15th June all Year will be invited into school for a 1:1 tutorial with a member of staff. We will contact you by School Comms with time and date

for this appointment. The purpose of this tutorial, which will last 30-60 minutes will be to to:

- Check on any issues around the student's well being
- Discuss progress with the online learning in English, Maths and Science and identify any gaps
- Induct the student into the operation of the Rainbow School with special reference to their individual timetable and the new safety rules (see below).

## **Staying Safe: Our Return to School Risk Assessment**

Throughout the period of our return to school, the safety of our students, staff and all of our families will be our paramount consideration. A major piece of work over the week or so has been the creation of a comprehensive risk assessment. This has involved Academy leaders, staff, Trades Unions and governors and is still work in progress. Version 3.1 will be discussed by governors this evening. Once it has been approved, I will publish it to all parents (probably in my next update next week).

The Risk Assessment aims to put in place control measures which will minimise the risk of infection entering the Academy or being transmitted within it. These measures will include, but not be limited to the hierarchy of "sensible measures" set out in the DfE publication of 12th May, Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend childcare settings, schools or colleges
- cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach
- minimising contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables (such as staggered break times)

In the end, it will be for every family to come to their own decision about whether or not their son or daughter should return when we re-open for Year 10 students on a (very) part time basis. I would make just two points: first, the educational, social and emotional impact on all of our students has been significant and the sooner we begin the re-opening process, the sooner we can begin to make up for lost time; second, as a father, if I were in your position I would send my child back in to school. If there is any aspect of the return to school you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me. It goes without saying that any discussions will be completely confidential and I will, of course, respect whatever decision you make.

## Key Worker Provision Continues

We continue to welcome a small but growing number of the children of Key Workers back into our full time provision. If you would like to take advantage of this, please email [lara.nolan@macclesfieldacademy.org](mailto:lara.nolan@macclesfieldacademy.org). As the number of students in the Academy each day grows, it is essential that all places on this provision are pre-booked in advance. We understand that shift patterns can change at short notice but please aim to email Lara by 4.00 each Thursday afternoon to let her know which days you would like places for the following week. Please note that it will be some time before we are in a position to re-open the school canteen; all students should, therefore, bring a packed lunch.

## Caring for the Vulnerable

Our provision for children with an EHCP, those with a social worker, and those who may be vulnerable for any other reason continues. We would very much encourage all children who meet any of these criteria to take part in this provision unless there are compelling reasons for not doing so. We will be contacting individual families to discuss this over the next few weeks. Please note that it will be some time before we are in a position to re-open the school canteen; all students should, therefore, bring a packed lunch.

## Live lessons- online!

Whatever the local and national attention given to the return to school, for almost all of our students most of the time, and for most of our students all of the time, distance learning will remain the core of their educational provision. After a number of trial lessons before half term, and online training sessions with over 30 staff, I am delighted that we are now in a position to start offering live virtual lessons to our students next week. These virtual lessons will allow teachers to explain work and interact with students in order to support them better. Whilst they are no replacement for our usual way of teaching, it does provide us with a significant move forward with distance learning.

The format of these lessons will vary depending on the teacher. Some may require students to watch a video or read a text beforehand, and then attend the virtual lesson for questions and answers. In some virtual lessons, staff will explain skills/topics with examples, and answer questions before setting students work to try after the lesson.

Students will need to access Microsoft Teams for the lessons. Ideally, they should download and install Microsoft Teams onto their laptop or computer, but there is also a mobile app, and it can be accessed through a normal internet browser. To log in they will need their school [username@macclesfieldacademy.org](mailto:username@macclesfieldacademy.org) and their usual password. For example, John Smith in Y7 will be [JSmith19@macclesfieldacademy.org](mailto:JSmith19@macclesfieldacademy.org)

In order to support our staff with their other commitments, we will not be following a fixed timetable. Instead the school website will be updated on Friday evenings for the scheduled lessons of the following week. Teachers will also remind students on Show My Homework and via Microsoft Teams. This style of teaching is still very new to all of us. As such, we are still finding ways to improve and to make it work for each subject. In the short term this means that not all classes or teachers will use virtual lessons. Teachers may choose to hold virtual lessons for groups within a class. This may be to provide

support, or to provide appropriate challenge. Parents/carers are encouraged to attend with students, and provide feedback to staff on how we can improve. The work that is covered on virtual lessons will be the same work that is on Show My Homework. We do not want to add to student workload, but instead make accessing it easier.

We have taken many safeguarding precautions in order to make this process safe. As part of these precautions we will only allow students onto the virtual lessons if we have permission from their parents/carers. Alongside this, students will agree to the Student Code of Conduct for Virtual Lessons. This is attached to this email. Please go through this with your son or daughter and explain the importance of it. This will be sent via the School Gateway shortly. If, having read through the Student Code of Conduct, you are happy for your child to access the virtual lessons, please give your consent via the School Gateway.

I should add that I am hugely grateful to Mr Laverick who is leading this important initiative and to all those staff who have so willingly taken part.

### **Exams- Ofqual consulting again**

It has been a busy few months for Ofqual. Last week they launched another consultation- this time on the extra exam series they are planning to run in the Autumn for any students who were unhappy with the grade they were awarded through the “calculated grades” process this summer. The consultation can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-an-additional-gcse-as-and-a-level-exam-series-in-autumn-2020>

Ofqual make make a number of key proposals:

1. to require exam boards to make examinations available in all GCSE, AS and A level subjects in the autumn series
2. to require exam boards to base results on students’ performance in exams alone and not on any non-exam assessment, with the exception of art and design qualifications
3. to vary the normal rules to allow exams to be held other than in May and June
4. to allow the exam boards to depart from the normal requirements for the issue of certificates
5. adopt the normal arrangements for reviews and appeals

While there is nothing in these proposals that is as profound in its impact on our students as the original (now thankfully disregarded) proposal that calculated grades should not be available to students in YY9-10), two of them do give pause for thought. Proposal 2 would mean that centre assessed work in, for example, music and drama would not count towards the final grade awarded in the autumn. Proposal 4 would mean that a student who wanted a single certificate which reflected only their best grades may need to pay and may not be able to get the same service from all exam boards. I suspect it may be very difficult to suggest a fair alternative to Proposal 2 but I am consulting subject staff and other Headteachers on this matter. I shall certainly respond to say that all exam boards should be required to provide, on request, single certificates showing the best grade achieved free of charge.

## Planning for a Recovery Curriculum

Assuming that all of our students are back in September (and while I very much hope this will be the case there can be no guarantees at this stage), most of them will have missed over 60 hours of classroom teaching in each of English, Maths and Science. Some of them will have compensated for this, at least in part, through their online learning; others will not.

At the governors' meeting this evening we shall be considering a number of possible strategies for recovering this position including:

- guiding more students in the new Year 11 towards the Additional Core Learning Groups (where they will have an extra lesson each week in English, Maths and Science) rather than taking an additional pathway subject
- changing the curriculum for the new Year 9 so that they will all follow a full range of subjects rather than begin a pathway subject; this would have the effect of enabling them to focus on catching up in English, Maths and Science rather than preparing for their first GCSE exam
- temporarily suspending the enrichment programme for the new Years 9-11 in order to allow additional time for teaching in their exam subjects.

Any comments you have on any of these strategies would be gratefully received. As you will appreciate, adopting any or all of these strategies would have implications for the allocation of students into pathway groups. We will, therefore, need to delay the publication of these groups until some of these curriculum decisions have been finalised.

## Year 11 Website

Because we realise that Year 11 students are no longer visiting Show My Homework, we have created a special section of the website just for them. This can be found at <https://www.macclesfieldacademy.org/year-11-support/> and contains details of careers, transition planning and other activities that we hope will keep them busy and active.

## The Rainbow Children

And finally, because this feels like a very "fact heavy" update, a change of mood at the end. One of my colleagues shared the poem below a week or so ago. I said at the start that the rainbow has become a national symbol of positivity and hope. I think this poem sums up that sense of optimism as well as all that we hope from our "Rainbow School" as our students start to return. Take care all of you and stay very safe.

### ***The Rainbow Children***

The history books will talk of now,  
That time the world stood still.  
When every family stayed at home,

Waved out from windowsills-  
At those they loved but could not hold,  
Because they loved them so.  
Yet, whilst they did they noticed all the flowers start to grow.

The sun came out, they can recall,  
And windows, rainbows filled.  
They kicked a football in their yards,  
Until the night drew in.  
They walked each day but not too close,  
That time the world stood still.  
When people walked straight down the roads,  
That once the cars did fill.

They saw that people became ill,  
They knew the world was scared.  
But whilst the world stood still they saw,  
How much the whole world cared.  
They clapped on Thursdays from their doors,  
They cheered for the brave.  
For people who would risk their lives,  
So others could be saved.

The schools closed down, they missed their friends,  
They missed their teachers so.  
Their Mums and Dads helped with their work.  
They helped their minds to grow.  
The parents used to worry that,  
As schools were put on hold,  
Their children wouldn't have the tools,  
They'd need as they grew old.

But history books will talk of them,  
Now adults, fully grown.  
Those many boys and girls back then,  
The ones who stayed at home.  
They'll tell you that they fixed this world,  
Of all they would fulfil.  
The RAINBOW children building dreams,  
They'd dreamed whilst time stood still

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