

**22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020**

Dear Parents and Carers

Although I have written a number of times to different groups of you over the last week or so, this feels like my first email to all parents for a little while. I hope that you are all continuing to keep well and stay safe and that, as some aspects of our lives at least are returning to something a bit closer to normal, you are enjoying some of the increased freedoms we now have. For myself, I find that I am more excited than I would have expected at the return of the football (even if Lincoln City's season is, sadly, over) but still desperately in need of a haircut. It was lovely to share a Fathers' Day picnic with my daughter yesterday, but I can't wait to see more of my friends in more different places.

As I write, the first day of our "Rainbow School" has just come to an end. This has been three weeks in the planning and it has been a real joy to see so many of our Year 10 students (about 70%) back in school over the last week. There are still places in each of our Year 10 "bubbles" and I attach a copy of the most recent version of our risk assessment so you can see the steps we have taken to minimise risk of the virus being transmitted in the Academy (which is, in any event, lower now that the infection rate within the community is so much reduced). If any further Year 10 students would like to return, please email [lara.nolan@macclesfieldacademy.org](mailto:lara.nolan@macclesfieldacademy.org) .

At the same time, the demand for places for vulnerable children and those of key workers in School Blue and School Yellow has continued to rise and some days we have been right up to capacity. It really is essential that you email [lara.nolan@macclesfieldacademy.org](mailto:lara.nolan@macclesfieldacademy.org) each Thursday to book places in these schools the following week. We are currently looking at ways in which we might be able to increase capacity but you will understand that this is difficult now that our "bubbles" are set up.

A couple of parents have asked about the use of face coverings in school. The government guidance does not recommend the use of face masks in schools. The full guidance can be found at : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings#effective-infection-protection-and-control>

If students wear face coverings of any sort on their way to school the guidance states that:

***Any disposable face coverings that staff, children, young people or other learners arrive wearing should be placed in a refuse bag and can be disposed of as normal domestic waste; and***

***Any homemade non-disposable face coverings that staff or children, young people or other learners are wearing when they arrive at their setting must be removed by the wearer and put in a plastic bag that the wearer has brought with them in order to take it home.***

The full guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe#how-should-ppe-and-face-coverings-be-disposed-of>

Some of you may also have noticed last week a change to the government guidance which means that secondary schools are able to invite pupils in other year groups in for a face-to-face meeting before the end of this term, where it would be beneficial and as long as this happens in line with this and wider protective measures guidance, and guidance on the numbers of pupils permitted on-site at any one time. See the full guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-schools-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-secondary-schools> . At our current levels of year 10 attendance, this would mean that we could invite approximately 4 students at a time (about 20 per day) in for one of these meetings. We hope this will make it possible for all students who would like a meeting of this kind to have one. Later this week we will be starting to contact those students who have found it difficult to engage with the online learning to invite them in to see what we can do to help. We will also look to prioritise any child who has had issues with anxiety or their general wellbeing for an early meeting. If you think your son or daughter would benefit from an early appointment, please email [matt.nicholson@macclesfieldacademy.org](mailto:matt.nicholson@macclesfieldacademy.org) .

Despite the excitement (and hard work from dozens of my already hard pressed colleagues) that has surrounded the opening of our Rainbow School, it is important to remember that, on any given day, almost 90% of our students will be working at home. I continue to be full of admiration for the work many of our students are doing and for the support that parents are giving them while also juggling work and other family commitments. Back in March, I suggested to parents of children in years 7-8 who were finding it hard to navigate their way through the sheer volume of the work on Show My Homework that they follow a timetable like the one below:

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri
Reading	20-30 minutes at the start of the day	20-30 minutes at the start of the day	20-30 minutes at the start of the day	20-30 minutes at the start of the day	20-30 minutes at the start of the day
Session 1	English	Maths	English	Maths	English

Session 2	One other subject (possibly chosen from today's timetable)	One other subject (possibly chosen from today's timetable)	One other subject (possibly chosen from today's timetable)	One other subject (possibly chosen from today's timetable)	One other subject (possibly chosen from today's timetable)
Session 3	One other subject or activity (eg an instagram challenge)	One other subject or activity (eg an instagram challenge)	One other subject or activity (eg an instagram challenge)	One other subject or activity (eg an instagram challenge)	One other subject or activity (eg an instagram challenge)

I know some families have found this helpful. Equally, others have developed a routine of their own and that is also absolutely fine. For some students, this programme is now also supplemented with virtual lessons. I am pleased that the number of lessons provided this way has increased each week since half term and I know that they have been very well received by many students. Equally, for some families they have been a bridge too far and I want to be clear that there is no pressure on students to participate in these lessons if they do not find them helpful. The important thing to restate is that one size does not fit all and that we will continue to support individual families to navigate their own way through the challenge of online learning. Please contact your child's tutor if you need any help or advice on this point.

Over the past few weeks we have identified a number of students who have found it particularly difficult to sustain their engagement with the online learning. We have begun providing bespoke alternatives including additional support with the technology and a reversion to paper based packs. If you think your son or daughter would benefit from additional support of this kind, please contact [laura.halsall@macclesfieldacademy.org](mailto:laura.halsall@macclesfieldacademy.org).

For students in Year 9 and Year 10, there is a further change to their online diet in the offing. By the end of this week, they will all know the additional pathway subjects (or subject if they are in Year 10 and have opted for the additional core learning in English, Maths and Science) that they will be taking next year. Online teaching for these subjects will begin next Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> June. In this respect our students are in a much more fortunate position than those in other schools who have already missed 10 weeks of class teaching in the "option" subjects in which they will take exams next year.

For students in Year 11, this Thursday marks their final day as Academy students. I shall write to them separately on Thursday to mark this event. However, that is not the end of our relationship with them. We will continue to post useful information at <https://www.macclesfieldacademy.org/year-11-support/>. We will continue to plan for

results day, the prom and awards evening and let them know as soon as we know what we are allowed to do when. We will continue to be available for support and advice, including over entries for the proposed autumn exam programme if they do not feel that the results they gain in the summer have done them justice.

In summary, therefore, the diet for our students now looks like this:

Years 7-8	Follow the timetable set out above from Show My Homework supplemented by virtual lessons where these are available and the student finds them helpful. <i>(For some students the delivery of Maths, English and Science will be by paper based packs)</i>
Year 9	Continue with work in the core subjects of English, Maths and Science. Start work on new pathway subjects
Year 10	Attend for your designated day if you are coming in to school. Continue with online work in the core subjects of English, Maths and Science. Start work on new pathway subject (s)
Year 11	Continue making use of the support and advice on careers, transition and beginning A level courses at <a href="https://www.macclesfieldacademy.org/year-11-support/">https://www.macclesfieldacademy.org/year-11-support/</a> Where you have already been provided with information and work for next year's post 16 courses, carry on with this preparation. If you have not yet heard from your post 16 provider, please contact <a href="mailto:sally.burgess@macclesfieldacademy.org">sally.burgess@macclesfieldacademy.org</a>

Although there is still almost a month of this term to go, we are also beginning to put plans in place to support students on their return to the Academy. Like the Prime Minister, we very much hope that they will all be back full time when schools re-open in September. Whenever they return, all of our students will need will need some combination of a modified curriculum, a bespoke catch up programme and support with the social and emotional challenges that such a long time out of school may have brought. Last week's announcement of catch up funding will probably amount to less than £100 per student. Less widely publicised was the simultaneous removal of the catch up support we would

normally receive for students who need extra help in Year 7. Rest assured, however, that we will do everything we possibly can to make sure that we have the best possible programme in place for each individual child. If you have any thoughts on the support your son or daughter may need, please discuss them with your child's tutor in the first instance.

Finally, I am very conscious that this email has focused very much on the "learning" half of the walnut. This does not mean that the "wellbeing" half has become any less important. We continue to work with many families to support the needs of individual students and, where necessary, to call on the support of other agencies. If you have any concerns at all about the wellbeing of your child, please do not hesitate to contact their tutor or a member of the pastoral team. The fact that, thankfully, the virus appears, for the time being at least, to be in retreat does not mean that all the anxieties children may have been feeling over the last few months will automatically disappear. Indeed, for some, the fact that the world seems to be changing yet again may well bring another set of worries. It is very important to me that you understand that we are here to help and will do everything we can to support our students through the next stage of this crisis. I have said it before but I will say it again; we are all in this together.

Thank you all for your continued support

With every best wish

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Richard Hedge', with a large loop at the end.

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