

5TH November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I know what it is like to be bombarded with emails and, as you know, I try to limit my communications to you to one a week, so I feel I need to apologise for contacting you again so soon after yesterday's email.

The urgency comes from the fact that, shortly before 4pm yesterday, we received a new set of guidance from the DfE. Snappily titled: ***Education and childcare settings: New National Restrictions from 5 November 2020 How New National Restrictions to control the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) impact education, childcare and children's social care settings***, it includes some important changes for schools, students and families following the start of the second national lockdown earlier today. I am, therefore, writing again to draw your attention to the key sections of the guidance and to explain how it will affect the Academy and our students.

Attendance: What the Guidance Says

Being at school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time spent out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children. This impact can affect both current levels of education, and children's future ability to learn. It continues to be our aim that all pupils, in all year groups, remain in school full-time.

The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school. For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in the classroom far outweigh the low risk from coronavirus.

This reinforces the point I made yesterday about the importance of school attendance for all of our students. I do realise that this is a source of some anxiety for some families and, as I said in yesterday's email, please do not hesitate to get in touch if there is any aspect of this you would like to discuss. It may be, for example, that there are additional safety measures we could put in place that would help re-assure you or your child.

Clinically Vulnerable (and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable) Children: What the Guidance Says

Children who are clinically vulnerable or have underlying health conditions but are not clinically extremely vulnerable, may continue to attend school in line with current guidance.

More evidence has emerged that shows there is a very low risk of children becoming very unwell from coronavirus (COVID-19), even for children with existing health conditions. Most children originally identified as clinically extremely vulnerable no longer need to follow original shielding advice. Parents should be advised to speak to their child's GP or specialist clinician if they have not already done so, to understand whether their child should still be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable.

Those children whose doctors have confirmed they are still clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend education whilst the national restrictions are in place. Schools will need to make appropriate arrangements to enable them to continue their education at home.

Children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend education.

Parents of clinically extremely vulnerable children will be receiving a letter shortly confirming this advice.

I quite understand that if your child has underlying health conditions, you may well want to discuss this with your GP or specialist clinician. Please do this as soon as you can. If you then need to discuss any aspects of our safety arrangements in school, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Face Coverings: What the Guidance Says

Face coverings should also be worn by pupils in year 7 and above when travelling on dedicated school transport to secondary school or college.

If your child comes to school on the bus from Wincle or the one from Sutton and Langley, please ensure that they wear a face covering at all times while they on the way to or from school. If they are exempt from wearing a face covering, they should make sure they are wearing their lanyard or carrying their exemption card.

Extra Curricular Activities: What the Guidance Says

Where schools are offering extra-curricular activities (that is, before and after school clubs) they should only do so where it is reasonably necessary to support parents to work, search for work, or undertake training or education, or where the provision is being used for the purposes of respite care

All of our after school clubs take place in single “bubbles” and in accordance with the specialist guidance for the activity taking place. We want to use the flexibility provided by the guidance to maintain these extra curricular activities in PE, Music and Art wherever they are useful to parents in enabling them to continue working, training, or looking for work. If your child regularly attends an after school activity **and** this supports you in any of the ways described in the guidance, please let me know by replying to this email directly to me at head@macclesfieldacademy.org. We will collate this information and see which activities we can justify retaining to start in the week beginning 16th November 2020. Because this process will take some days to complete and to communicate the outcomes back to families, **there will be no after school clubs in the week beginning 9th November 2020.**

This section of the guidance applies only to after school clubs and not to timetabled lessons which take place between 3.00 and 4.00. Our school day on Tuesday-Thursday has been extended for Year 11 to enable us to deliver additional lessons in English, Maths and Science as part of our recovery curriculum. These lessons will continue as normal. Similarly, many students taking GCSE Art and GCSE Digital Photography attend after school classes as part of the course requirement. These classes will continue as normal.

External Tuition: What the Guidance Says

Schools are able to work with external coaches, clubs and organisations for curricular activities where they are satisfied that it is safe to do so.

This means that peripatetic music lessons with external teachers will be able to continue with the same safety measures that are already in place.

My sense is that we are moving back into a period where circumstances could change quite quickly. I shall, of course, do everything I can to keep you up to date with any changes as and when they occur. I hope this will be possible without quite such a barrage of emails as has been necessary over the last couple of days!

With every best wish

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a final upward stroke that tapers to a point.

Richard Hedge
Headteacher
The Macclesfield Academy

PA: Lara Nolan
lara.nolan@macclesfieldacademy.org
Tel: 01625 383113