

March 10th 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing on Wednesday afternoon, after three action-packed days in which we have (ably assisted by our magnificent team of volunteers) tested almost 550 students (all, I am glad to say with negative results) and delivered 27 safety briefings to reach all of our students in socially distanced groups, the Academy is now back in full swing and all of our students are back in lessons. It is a delight to have the sight and sound of so many young people back in the building once again. For the avoidance of doubt, the amended start times over the last three days were purely to help us manage the tests and our normal staggered start (0840 for YY7-9 and 0900 for YY10-11) will operate for all students from tomorrow morning.

Testing will continue over the next six school days as follows:

Thursday 11 th	Years 10-11
Friday 12 th	Years 8-9
Monday 15 th	Year 7
Tuesday 16 th	Years 10-11
Wednesday 17 th	Years 8-9
Thursday 18 th	Year 7

After that we will move to home testing. We will issue students with their own kits next week and provide them with guidance on performing the tests and reporting the results. Year 7s who are not yet 12 will need parents to conduct the swabbing for them. All other students can swab themselves. The tests should be conducted twice a week, 3-5 days apart, ideally on Mondays and Thursdays.

As you will have heard the government is also asking families and support bubbles of secondary age students to self-test. Testing kits for family (and bubble) members can be collected from the Macclesfield Testing Centre. Like the student testing, this is, of course, entirely voluntary but testing is one important element in our system of controls and the more families that are taking part in the self-testing programme the more confident the whole academy community can be that we are doing everything we can to ensure that our staff and students stay safe.

Our safety briefings this week have been entitled: **Seven Ways to Stay Safe**. They have taken students through the seven part system of controls set out by the DfE in their guidance for schools. The key point is that all the controls are equally important and none of them alone is foolproof. However, if we can ensure that as many members of the Academy community as possible are applying as many of the controls as possible for as much of the time as possible we have the best possible chance of keeping everyone in school as safe as possible.

To this end, I have produced the table below which identifies ways in which parents can help us to implement each element of the system of controls and so help us to keep everybody safe.

From DfE System of Controls	Implications for Parents
Minimise contact with individuals who are required to self-isolate by ensuring they do not attend the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that, with regret, we will still not allow any unnecessary parental visits into the Academy • Do not send your child to school if you they have Covid symptoms (a high temperature, a new dry continuous cough or a change to their sense of taste or smell) • Once the home testing regime begins (week beginning 22nd March) support students in testing each Monday and Thursday (if you consent to this) • Collect home testing kits from the test centre for all family/bubble members and test twice a week (if you consent to this)
Ensure face coverings are used in recommended circumstances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that any student who is not exempt has a face covering in school (preferably a washable fabric one; students using disposable paper masks may need several each day)
Ensure everyone is advised to clean their hands thoroughly and more often than usual.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasise the importance of handwashing • Consider providing your child with a small bottle of hand sanitizer and/or hand cream.
Ensure good respiratory hygiene for everyone by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure students have a pack of tissues in school
Maintain enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure students have a pack of anti-bacterial wipes in school to clean their desk at the start of lessons
Consider how to minimise contact across the site and maintain social distancing wherever possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure students arrive at the right time for their staggered start (0835 for students in YY7-9; 0855 for students in YY 10-11) (We appreciate that a small number of students arriving by bus will be unavoidably early; these students, and these students only, may shelter in the library before their registration time) • Remind students of the need to avoid any unnecessary close contact* with people outside their household or bubble in or out of school. (This will reduce the risk of avoidable periods of self isolation just as restrictions are being lifted)
Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because rooms will have doors and windows open at all times, you may wish your child to wear more layers than normal. They may wear a vest or tee shirt underneath their school shirt and/or a plain jumper or hoodie over their white shirt. This must be in addition to their full school uniform of shirt tie and blazer. • On PE days, students should wear plain track suit bottoms and their school blazer.

*Definition of close contact:

- being coughed on, or
- having a face-to-face conversation within 1 metre, or
- having unprotected skin-to-skin physical contact, or
- travelling together in a small vehicle, or
- any contact within 1 metre for 1 minute or longer without face-to-face contact or
- extended close contact (between 1 and 2 metres for more than 15 minutes)

I am very aware that we continue to ask a great deal of our parents as well as our staff and our students as we seek to maintain the best possible educational provision in the middle of what is still a major public health crisis. However, like many of you I am sure, I have been struck by the large rainbow notices around Macclesfield saying “we can get through this together”. It is this collective effort that has got us this far through over a year of the pandemic and it is the same combined endeavour that will see us through to the end. All the signs are that another few months sustained effort will get us to a much better place both locally and nationally and, as ever, I am grateful to you all for your contributions to our shared aim of being the very best we can be for all of our children.

With every best wish

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Hedge', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

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