

01 March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I write to set out our plans for the wider opening of school from 8th March, as announced by the government. Before doing so, I would first like to express my gratitude to parents and carers for their support in the delivery of remote education. It is because of this support that the vast majority of pupils were regularly accessing our remote education offer, either through academic learning or the family activity packs. Whilst we hope that this is the last lockdown, should there be any further interruptions to education, we will revert to setting remote education as we have for the past two months.

Return to school – Primary age Nurture pupils

Our two primary age nurture groups, based at the Barrow Hill and High Peak sites, will return fully to our provision on Monday the 8th March. Members of our nurture team will contact you to discuss the return to school. Please be advised that your child's primary school may have different plans to us regarding the return to school and we recommend checking with the school before the 8th March.

Return to school – Secondary age pupils

To ensure the safe return of secondary age pupils, we will stagger the return of those in years 7-11 from the 8th March, giving priority to pupils in year 11. Over the course of the next week we will contact all families to discuss the return date for your child and their timetable. This will provide you with an opportunity to raise any questions or concerns that you may have regarding the wider re-opening of school.

Government expectation is that once the school has opened more widely to all pupils, they should be attending their full provision every week.

Control Measures

From the 8th March, we will return to the previous control measures that were put in place at the start of the academic year in September. Pupils will once again be taught in year group or key stage bubbles, with social distancing in place where possible. As before, pupils will stay in a dedicated room for all lessons with the same room used at lunchtimes. Staff will rotate around classrooms to deliver subjects, rather than pupils moving around the school site. Pupils will be given ample opportunity to take breaks outside.

We will continue to insist on good hygiene practice; pupils will be required to wash their hands regularly with a particular focus on arrival, and at the start and end of lunchtime. Our cleaning regimes will continually focus on key 'touchpoints' throughout the school and the sharing of equipment will be prohibited. Pupils will always be required to maintain a minimum distance of 2m from staff, except where they are being directly supported and masks are worn.

Masks

The government guidance on the wider opening of school requires all pupils to wear a face covering where social distancing cannot be achieved, except only for those with medical exemption. In most classrooms, it is not possible for pupils to be social distanced from each other, and therefore pupils will be required to wear a mask in lessons where this is the case. On the occasion that social distancing between pupils can be achieved, for example as a result of using a larger space, pupils will be offered the opportunity to remove their mask. As already noted, pupils will be given breaks throughout the day to go outside, where they will not be required to wear a mask.

Staff will also wear masks in the classroom, except when delivering learning from a distance of at least 2m from pupils. When directly supporting individuals, teachers and teaching assistants will apply face coverings before approaching pupils.

We are happy to provide a mask to any child who requires one.

Testing

You will know from the government announcements regarding the wider opening of schools, that regular testing will be available to pupils. With your consent, we will be offering twice weekly lateral flow device (LFD) tests to all pupils, which can be taken at home. Those tests will be distributed as soon as they arrive in school, shortly after the 8th March. School staff are also undertaking twice weekly testing.

To receive the kits, parents will be required to complete a consent form which will be sent to you later in the week. In addition to providing consent, the form will give the option to either send the kits home with pupils or be collected from the school. Should you choose for the kits to be sent home with your child, we will inform you on the day so that you can expect them at home. Once kits leave the school site, we are unable to take responsibility for them or their use.

If you have any queries or questions relating to testing, please let us know. Testing is completely optional, however, we encourage testing to take place as it provides an additional layer of safety to our control measures. Pupils can still attend if they choose not to take the test.

Finally, I have included a letter from the CEO of our multi-academy trust which sets out the trust's position in relation to the wider opening of schools from the 8th March.

As ever, take care and stay safe. We look forward to welcoming all of our pupils back into school.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MS' with a stylized flourish.

Matt Morris
Headteacher