

Dear Parents/Carers

### **Return to schools following COVID19 Closure**

Schools closed to the vast majority of students on Friday the 20<sup>th</sup> March and we are all so very proud of how we have supported one another through this challenging time. The school has been charged by the DfE, from the week commencing 1st June 2020 to welcome back more children to school. The Government will only do this providing the five key tests they have set are met, including a decline in the rate of infection and the programmes set out in the Roadmap are operational. As a result, we must plan on the basis that these tests have been met.

With that in mind, on 1<sup>st</sup> of June, if the infection rates continue to fall and the Government's five tests are met, schools will begin a phased reopening. This will initially focus on the reintegration of Reception (F2), Year 1 and Year 6 students.

As a Trust, we will aim to implement the government strategy to the best of our ability whilst adapting it to the needs of the school community (pupils, parents and staff). Whilst we understand this is a very worrying time for everybody, we will continue to follow government and scientific advice and guidance when making decisions. However, in this unprecedented time, as with all decisions we have made, the safety and well-being of our community are our first priority. You have my word that we will keep our plans under constant review and always act with in the best interests of students and their families.

This letter will provide all our Wickersley Partnership Trust parents and students with the steps we are taking to ensure we safeguard everyone on site without compromising learning, and whilst mitigating the risk of any spread of infection.

### **Which year groups and when?**

We intend to continue onsite learning for those pupils who have accessed the emergency provision so far, regardless of the year group they are in.

We intend to follow the government guidance on which groups of students will be our priority.

This will Initially be:

- Year 6
- Then Year 1
- Followed by FS2

We aim to phase the introduction of these three year-groups during w/c 1st June and 8th June - over a two-week period. This will allow us to adapt our practice based on how the students respond.

Current guidance indicates classrooms should educate no more than 15 students at any one time. We do not have enough room across school to accommodate all students in this way. As a result, we are implementing the following steps to ensure the safety of all our students and staff without compromising learning and development:

### **Timetabling and zoning:**

- Leaders have taken steps to zone the school to minimise contact between groups of students and staff.
- Groups of students and staff will be allocated to a zone and no member of staff or student will be allowed to cross zones during the course of the day.
- Each zone will have its own toilet block, entrance, exit and route, these will be clearly identified.
- Each zone will have dedicated cleaners, although in smaller sites, cleaners may work across more than one zone but remain the lone cleaner within the zone.
- Students will have allocated desks to work at and teachers will teach from the front of the classroom at all times

### **Social Distancing Measures:**

- Times of opening and closing for different zones (groups of students and staff) are to be staggered to keep large groups from coming together.
- Students must stay within their allocated classroom and teachers will circulate between classes. This is to help mitigate any potential spread of the virus. This will enable leaders to track and trace with accuracy should anyone contract the virus.
- Equipment packs will be provided for individual students where necessary and remain on desks so students are not sharing equipment.

### **Reducing Mixing within school settings:**

- Where possible, students will access their allocated zone directly through a dedicated entrance to limit contact with students in other zones.
- Where possible, we will operate a one-way system within each zone. This is to keep student and staff mixing within a zone to a minimum.
- Breaks and lunch times will be staggered so that we can limit the number of students on corridors and outdoors.
- We will limit the number of students using the toilet facilities. Only one student will be permitted to enter a toilet block at any one time.

### **Use of Outside Space:**

- Outside space will be used predominantly for exercise, break time and for outdoor education. This is to ensure we abide by social distancing measures.

### **Reduce the use of shared resources:**

- The amount of resources that are taken home will be limited.
- Practical lessons will only go ahead if equipment can be cleaned thoroughly.
- Where practical lessons go ahead, the classroom will only be used by the same students in any one day and cleaned thoroughly between cohorts.

### **Transport to and from school:**

- Parents and students should walk or cycle to school where possible.
- Parents should refrain from accompanying their child to school. However, if this is not possible only one parent should attend.
- Parents must not gather at entrance gates or doors or enter the building.

- Any student, parent, carer or any visitors, such as suppliers, must not enter the school under any circumstance if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus.

#### **Personal Protective equipment:**

- Schools and other education or childcare settings should not require staff, children and learners to wear face coverings (DfE advice).
- However, we anticipate that some staff and students may wear face coverings. This is a personal choice and will be supported by the school.
- Whilst, in line with current scientific advice and guidance, we do not require students to wear face coverings, this guidance is ever-evolving and we will update our expectations as and when needed.

#### **Catering:**

- We would encourage all students to bring their own packed lunch to school as this is the most effective way of mitigating the risk of any spread of infection.
- Where this is not possible, students will be able to purchase a packed lunch only from the school canteen. Rather than students enter the canteen, any food purchased will be delivered to classrooms. There will be no hot meal service available during this time and packed lunches will need to be pre-ordered.

#### **Expectations regarding hygiene:**

All schools within WPT will follow the COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance

- All schools will ensure that sufficient handwashing facilities are available. Sinks will be nearby for all students and hand sanitiser will be distributed in all teaching zones.
- After each lesson, surfaces that student are touching, such as toys, books, desks, chairs, doors, sinks, toilets, light switches, bannisters, will be cleaned more regularly than normal.
- Bins for tissues are emptied throughout the day.

#### **All adults and children will be expected to:**

- Frequently wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry thoroughly.
- Clean and sanitise their hands on arrival at the school, before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing
- Not to touch their mouth, eyes and nose where possible
- Use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins for tissue waste ('catch it, bin it, kill it')

#### **Attendance:**

We will indicate to all parents which students are expected to attend school as our provision expands. No student should attend school unless scheduled to do so by the school as part of our key work provision or phased re-opening. School registers will be taken in line with statutory guidance and contact with home will be made as normal regarding student absence. Current advice and guidance is that no action will be taken against either parents or school regarding pupil attendance.

#### **Provision for those children not scheduled to attend school:**

Our online learning provision will continue as normal and all students are expected to engage with it. As stated previously, we know that some parents will choose not to send their children to school. Where this is the case, we expect these students to continue to engage with their online learning.

### **Managing potential and confirmed cases of COVID-19:**

Staff and students in all settings will be eligible for testing if they become ill with coronavirus symptoms.

- **In a suspected case or confirmed case of students showing symptoms** parents will be advised to self-isolate students and school does not need to close at this stage. In some cases, related students may be advised to self-isolate as well. Information and advice will be sent to all parents of students in school.
- **In a suspected case or confirmed case of staff member showing symptoms** staff member will be advised to self-isolate.
- **In above cases where confirmation of virus is received** students and staff who have been in close contact with the confirmed case will be notified and provided with relevant advice and guidance.
- **In multiple cases of infection, school will contact Public Health England and initiate guidelines and advised protocols:**
  - Send students/staff home
  - Instigate a deep clean
  - Once deep clean conducted re-open school
  - Students/staff with no symptoms can return to school immediately
  - Students/Staff with symptoms would self-isolate for 7 days

As you are aware this is an ever-evolving situation. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and should we get any new advice from the Government, the Department for Education or Rotherham Local Authority, we will inform you immediately. We will continue to communicate with you through parent text service and keep you updated through social media and the school website.

This has been a very challenging time for us all. However, the commitment, support and understanding we have shown one another within our community has been overwhelming. We have all -parents, staff and students - done our utmost to ensure our children are safe, well and continue to thrive with their learning. As always, should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me via email or MyEd.

The government has stated that the phased re-opening of schools will go ahead if the 5 key tests are met. As a result, all our best laid plans are subject to change. That said, our commitment remains second to none and we will continue to ensure the well-being of our students and the school community is at the heart of all our decision making. We will endeavour to give you timely notice of any changes.

As always, thank you for your continued support in these uncharted circumstances.

Helen O'Brien

CEO

