

13th July 2021

RE: Latest guidance for schools

Dear parent/carer

As you may be aware, the Government has provided additional guidance for schools as part of the next phase of lifting lockdown. This means that many of the risk management measures which have been in place over the last 12 months will no longer be required. The Government have stipulated that this will come into effect from the 19th July, but that schools can continue with the current measures if the term runs beyond the 19th July. The Government have published information for parents which can be found here:

[Step 4 update - what parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/step-4-update-what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges)

Alongside many other schools within the Local Authority, we are asking our schools **to maintain their current risk management measures for the last week of term**. I am sure families will be aware that infection rates in our area remain high: [Coronavirus cases Kirklees | Tableau Public](#) Not only will maintaining measures allow for a smooth and orderly end to term, but it will also reduce the risk of transmission to pupils and staff. Current guidance means that should anyone – including children – be identified as a close contact, they will be required to self-isolate. Maintaining bubbles, social distancing, and face coverings in middle schools, allows us to reduce the risk to families, children and staff of needing to isolate or becoming unwell. We are very aware that many families have plans at the beginning of the Summer break and the need to isolate will cause a significant disruption and unnecessary worry.

Bubbles:

I am sure families will be aware that one of the most significant changes is that the need for schools to use 'bubbles' will stop. Again, we will continue to use the current bubble system in the last week of term as our schools are structured around this system. However, I would like to reassure families, that we have rarely closed full bubbles and have only ever asked children who are identified as a close contact (under the national definition) to isolate. Full bubbles have only been closed where we have had a number of positive cases within the bubble and this has always been on the instruction of Public Health England. It is worth noting that under the new guidance, schools will no longer conduct track and trace procedures from 19th July – this will be done by 'Track and Trace'. However, we will work with them to ensure close contacts can be identified if required in the last week of term. We would still ask that families continue to notify school of positive cases in the usual way and that children self-isolate if they, or someone in their household, is symptomatic.

In September, Headteachers are planning to return to 'pre-covid' systems and structures. However, schools have been asked to have 'Outbreak' plans in place in case of a change of advice nationally or locally.

On site Testing:

The guidance stipulates that secondary schools will be required to conduct 2 on site tests on children's return to school in September. Our Middle Schools will once again set up the testing facilities for children of secondary age (Years' 7 and 8) and will be in contact with the details of how these arrangements will work. Due to the logistics involved, this will once again involve a staggered start to term for pupils in these year groups as it did in March this year.

Face Coverings:

The legal requirement to wear face coverings will be removed from Stage 4 of the lifting of lockdown. However, the Government continue to 'recommend' they be used in crowded areas. Current measures in our schools will not change in the last week of term for the reasons outlined above.

Thank you:

We would like to offer our sincere thanks to all of our families, and especially our children, who have shown enormous resilience over the last 12-18 months. It has been a very challenging time and I know we are all keen to return to some semblance of normality as soon as possible. We would kindly ask that families continue to support schools by continuing to adhere to the measures currently in place for the last week of term in order that everyone can enjoy a much needed break as we move into the Summer holiday period.

Thank you for your continued support, patience and generosity. I wish everyone a safe, healthy and restful Summer period and we all look forward to seeing all of our children back in September.

Kind regards



Mrs N Greenough

CEO, The Mast Academy Trust