

3rd January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I wanted to write to reassure you regarding arrangements for the start of the new term. There has been much discussion in the press regarding a new variant of Covid 19 which has affected a number of areas in the country quite significantly. This has resulted in some discussion around the safe reopening of schools. I am sure this will be unsettling for many parents/carers.

I would like to reassure you that the health and safety and well-being of staff, pupils and families remains our primary concern and we continue to monitor the situation closely. Currently, the infection rates in Kirklees are relatively low when compared to the national picture. The data can be seen here: [Rates of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Kirklees | Kirklees Council](#). It is however, essential that we all continue to be vigilant and follow the national and Tier 3 guidance. [COVID-19 restrictions in Kirklees | Kirklees Council](#)

Start of term arrangements:

On Monday 4th January, all schools within our Trust have a training day and this will continue as planned, but Head teachers will provide opportunities to revisit each school's Risk Assessment. These continue to be available on each school's website. For pupils, parents/carers will be aware that:

- First Schools will open for pupils as normal from 5th January 2021
- Middle Schools will open as normal for Year 6 from 5th January 2021
- Middle Schools will provide on-site education for all vulnerable pupils and Critical worker children in years' 7 and 8 from 5th January and remote education for all other pupils.
- All secondary age pupils will return to site from 18th January

Coronavirus symptoms and school:

It is essential that everyone is vigilant around ensuring that anyone with symptoms isolates immediately alongside their household members and seeks a test if they have coronavirus symptoms.

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Most people with coronavirus have at least 1 of these symptoms.

FREEDOM TO GROW; STRENGTH YOU CAN TRUST

It is essential that if your child, or anyone in your household, displays symptoms, that **your child isolates and does not attend school until they, or the symptomatic household member, has received a negative test result** or the completion of the specified isolation period should the result be positive. [Get a free NHS test to check if you have coronavirus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/get-a-free-nhs-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus)

Community testing:

You may be aware that Kirklees are also offering community testing. Further details can be found here: [Mass community testing: Getting a test if you don't have symptoms | Kirklees Council](#)

This testing is available for anyone who does not have symptoms, but would like a test and is available for anyone over the age of 11, who lives or works in Kirklees.

Testing in Secondary Schools:

Our leaders have worked across the Christmas holiday to begin looking at the logistical requirements for conducting lateral flow testing in our Middle Schools for secondary age pupils. Head teachers will shortly be sending out further information, but I am sure parents/carers will appreciate there are many logistics to work through to ensure schools can conduct tests safely, efficiently and effectively.

Finally:

I am sure parents/carers will appreciate that this is an ever changing situation. We will continue to keep parents/carers informed of any change in circumstances.

I would like to thank you for your continued support throughout what continues to be a challenging and quickly changing situation.

Kind regards



Mrs N Greenough

CEO, The Mast Academy Trust