

*Success nothing less*

26th March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

**A successful return**

It has been fantastic having all the children back in school over the last 3 weeks. Learning, as always, is at the top of the agenda and it has been amazing to see full classrooms again with students acquiring knowledge and developing skills and making that all important progress. That’s not to say that our remote learning wasn’t impactful on children’s learning but I think everyone would agree that the best place for children to learn is in school.

Phrases such as ‘catch up’ and ‘lost learning’ are banned at Aspire. The mantra around the school is very much about making each one of our Golden Hours count and over time this will help to compensate for the time that students have been working at home. Clearly, for some students there will need to be additional support. We have signed up to The National Tutoring Program and we are in the process of employing some additional staff to support students’ learning going forward over the next two of years. We are confident that the strategies we are implementing at Aspire will successfully support all students to make or exceed the progress expected of them.

However, for us to maximise our impact on learning we need all students to attend school on time on a daily basis with a positive attitude to their learning. Attendance on our full return has been above the national average, which is pleasing, but we always strive for more and we need each child’s individual attendance to be as close to 100% as possible. The same applies to punctuality. Students must be on time. I know the bus service has been disrupted due to COVID but if students arrive late they miss out on key learning time.

Since the start of the academic year back in September we have tried to provide the best education possible for all of our students in the midst of a global pandemic. The biggest challenge has been keeping in excess of 900 people safe. I would like, therefore, to pay tribute to all of our staff and students that have shown such resilience and flexibility to make the year to date such a success. We have had extremely low numbers of positive COVID-19 cases at Aspire and that is testament to how everyone has conducted themselves whilst at school in terms of adhering to the rules and being flexible. This has not been easy. Working in one single classroom all day, having breaks in the classroom, being taught in bubbles, short lunches in the canteen, the wearing of masks in communal spaces and more latterly classrooms too, regular COVID testing either in school or at home, social distancing for staff, constant hand sanitisation and staggered school days have all been major challenges and have become part of the new ‘normal’.

However, the sunshine at the end of the storm is in sight. We await Government guidance on these matters but hope that this will be the case. As the summer term progresses we may also be able to remove some of the restrictions we have in school alongside the rest of society reopening up after the lockdown. With the support of all of you, our families, we have achieved a lot together and I am very proud of how the school has operated during the pandemic.

With our focus being on health and safety and student progress we have been more flexible with uniform. For example, removing the need for students to get changed by allowing students to wear their PE kit on days when they have it.

Since we have returned, however, we have seen a significant downturn in the standard of general uniform. This is particularly apparent on PE days, with some students arriving in what can only be described as non-uniform. Using our Winter Grant from the council we have tried to support as many families as possible with items of PE kit to ensure all student have wheat they need.

From Monday 12th April when we return from the holiday we will be moving to a zero-tolerance method of working regarding uniform. Non-uniform items such nose studs, tongue bars and false eye lashes are 3 of the main issues at the moment that can easily be rectified. There are no excuses for coming to school with these items. Items of school uniform such as the PE kit, blazers, ties and skirts can be ordered from our uniform suppliers who are running a click and collect system.

Here is a link to the uniform pages on our school website: -

<https://www.blackpoolaspireacademy.co.uk/information/uniform>

We will continue to work with all families to breakdown any specific barriers that may exist regarding uniform but we need your support in ensuring uniform is of a high standard from the first day back. If a student does not have the full PE then they should wear their full uniform instead. Children that arrive in non-uniform will either be sent home to get changed or placed in isolation.

Thank you in advance for your support on this matter.

If you have any queries or would like more information on anything school related please get in touch via either admin@aspire.fcat.org.uk or on (01253) 353155.

Finally, I would like to extend to all our families my best wishes for a lovely Easter.

Yours faithfully,

John Woods

Headteacher