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|  | Cumbria Academy for AutismBranthwaite RoadWorkingtonCumbria CA14 4SS01900 517632 |

Wednesday 3rd March 2021

Dear Parents

I am writing to you to confirm our plans to fully reopen the school on Monday 8th March. Our class teams have been in touch with you all individually, but I thought it important to convey to everyone our intentions and thank you for your ongoing support during these challenging and difficult lockdown periods.

We understand that each pupil is unique and will face their own challenges in returning. To this end, please keep your child’s class teacher up to date with how your child is coping with their return to school. If they are anxious, or if there are other factors that may affect their return, we can set up transition programs as required to support them and help them return confidently to school. The majority of our staff will be back on site as normal, and classes will be returning to the groups and rooms that they are used to. The school day will be as it was before lockdown; the school day will begin at 9am and finish at 3pm. For those children who travel to school via transport arranged by the County Council, your transport company should get in touch with you over the coming week to confirm collection and drop-off times. If this does not happen, I would advise you to ring the transport team directly and get this information.

Hot school lunches will be available for our children again from the 8th March. Please use the Lunch Shop App / website to preorder meals. If you have any issues with your login, please contact the school office at admin@cumbriaacademyforautism.org.uk

Sadly, Covid is still with us and in the upcoming months, we will still be restricted within the school setting in order to keep everybody as safe as we can, minimising the risk of exposure. With this in mind, we will continue to encourage the use of PPE for staff and pupils; if they want to wear it they can. Hand washing and cleanliness in school will still be a high priority and we would ask that children wear a fresh set of clothes each day. In the current climate, this does not need to be specifically uniform. Our revised Risk Assessments will be available on the Cumbria Academy for Autism website.

You may be aware of the Governments most recent announcements. I imagine that these will not be the last as it is an ever-changing picture. However, some of the key points that you may have questions regarding are:

**Face masks for Secondary**

It is recommended that all pupils from Year 7 should wear a face mask if they can’t socially distance. Children of any age may wear a mask if they wish to - we welcome this as wearing a face mask reduces the risk for everyone. We will also be very realistic with this, as we are aware that not all of our children will be able to / want to do this. As a result, we will not be enforcing people to wear them.

**LFT tests and Home tests**

All secondary pupils can voluntarily take a COVID LFT test when back on site. We are being asked to set this up so that within the first two weeks all pupils are tested three times and then we would move to home test kits. We still have your decisions on consent and we will not be forcing anyone to take a test.

Our intention is to demonstrate to the children what the tests look like and how they are administered. This will allow us to see if any of the children are willing to undertake them. We understand that it is highly likely that the majority of secondary pupils will struggle with this and will opt-out. If you are hoping to get the home test kits that the Government have also discussed, we would want your child to be doing the LFT tests in school firstly before accessing these. If you would like to accompany your child into school to support them in completing an LFT test, please let us know and we can build this into the start of the school day.

Ultimately, it is incredibly important to us that we provide an environment and transition that allows the children of our school to return comfortably and confidently with as little anxiety as possible. We value your child’s education and know how important it is for us all to re-establish the routines that we have worked so hard to achieve in the past. We will continue to follow risk assessments, procedures and guidance to keep everyone as safe as we can in these challenging times. The last thing we want is to have any positive cases on site that would require our ‘school bubble’ to close down. If you have any questions or concerns please get in touch with your class teams or email / phone the school office.

We thank you for your continued support and look forward to welcoming all children back full time next week.

Yours sincerely,

Mr R Aindow