

8th July 2020,

Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer,

Re: September and the new academic year

I would like to start by thanking you for your patience and support. I know that life since lockdown has not been easy for any of us and the virus, subsequent guidance and restrictions have presented their own pressures. I would like to thank all of you who have been managing your child's learning at home and once again apologise to those of you whose children we have not been able to accommodate in school in these remaining weeks of the school term.

The news is that all years will be welcomed back to school in September. Clearly, none of us know what may happen in the interim or indeed in the Autumn Term once we have returned, however, there is new government guidance for how we might manage to balance reducing the assessed risks with having the capacity to bring all pupils back. This guidance, which contains information for schools relating to public health advice to minimise coronavirus risks (including sections on school operations, curriculum, behaviour, pastoral support, assessment, accountability and contingency planning for outbreaks), can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

We remain resolute that what we provide must be meaningful and manageable for all within this continuing strange context; we wish to get back to providing the best possible school experience we can for every child from Early Years to Sixth Form. Our approach has so far been cautious, phased and participative and this will continue, however, we will need to remain vigilant and respond to any change in circumstance, reviewing things daily to ensure the safety of our pupils and staff.

Before the summer holidays, your school will contact you to inform you of the detail of provision in September with start dates, staggered arrivals/breaks/lunchtimes where appropriate, etc. We will all continue to promote the best practice, as advised by Public Health England, which will involve proportionate control measures.

These measures will include:

- strict and swift support for anyone showing symptoms, getting tests done and requiring isolation at home to protect other children and staff;
- keeping pupils in groups, although these 'bubbles' or 'pods' will need to be larger to accommodate all, to limit the spread of the virus should anyone become ill;
- maximising distancing and minimising movement around the school where possible;
- strict hygiene, including regular handwashing, use of tissues, hand sanitiser and enhanced cleaning routines.

Schools will have individual risk assessments, as now, updated to inform preparations for September. We should all recognise that the relaxing of current procedures and welcoming all pupils back may inevitably carry greater risk to health. That said, we recognise equally the need for pupils to see their friends for their well-being and to be taught appropriately for their education and future prospects.



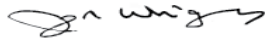
With regards to mask-wearing this will not be required in accordance with the guidance and this includes travel on designated school buses, where these are taking pupils only. Where public transport is to be used, pupils will need to wear appropriate face coverings. To assist with our planning, schools may be asking all parents and carers to tell us your child's anticipated travel arrangements in September. We would urge all where practical to walk or cycle to school, whilst maintaining social distancing, to minimise risk.

With regards to the curriculum, we will amend the curriculum as necessary, so that students can re-visit essential subject knowledge, skills and concepts that have been studied remotely during school closure. We will provide some 'catch up' time and resources to support those who need it.

We will look to update you regularly, as we have done throughout this pandemic, and if there are any questions that you wish us to consider at this initial stage please do contact your school at the earliest opportunity. Please rest assured that all decisions taken will continue to be based on safety and in the best interests of our young people.

We are all looking forward to the re-opening of schools to all pupils once again and to welcoming our pupils back to school in the new academic year. Thank you as always for your positive engagement, feedback and support as we navigate through these unprecedented times together.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Wright', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jon Wright, Chief Executive Officer,
Omega Multi-Academy Trust.