



4th January 2021

Dear Parents,

COVID-19 Parent Update

Once again, we hope this finds you all safe and well and looking forward, probably in the longer term, to a better year than 2020 in many ways.

As I am sure you would expect, all staff at Tarleton Academy are working hard to ensure students and their families receive the best support possible during this period of almost daily change, uncertainty and worry.

There is a lot of unhelpful media messaging around 'lazy, striking teachers'. We hope you understand that our teachers and support staff are working flat out to once again to change their planning and respond to the latest demands of these ever changing circumstances. We work in schools, with children, because we want the best for them and our relationships with our students and their families are essential in our work. We hope you also appreciate that we want everyone to be as safe as they can be and we believe that the health and wellbeing of everyone in our school community is paramount. This will always be our highest priority.

For the vast majority of students this week, school will remain closed for face to face learning with the majority of our students accessing their learning remotely at home.

Students in school from Wednesday 6th January – Friday 8th January

Our **most vulnerable and high needs SEND** students will be invited into school from Wednesday of this week. Parents will be contacted directly today by staff with further details and will discuss in more detail with you the supervised well-being and learning support that will be provided.

Given the more transmissible nature of the new-variant virus, the school will be following stringent Public Health England (PHE) health and safety guidance which will include strict adherence to the wearing of face masks and a maximum of **ten** students in any given classroom to ensure staff and students are compliant with 2-metre social distancing in classrooms, which hasn't been possible previously.

It is for this reason, to keep numbers down and reduce the chances of virus transmission that students will only be invited into school where it is essential, so that we keep the number of students in school at a safe and manageable level.

Outstanding education at the heart of the community

If you have not been contacted by staff, but feel that your child should be in school, please email enquiries@tarletonacademy.org and a member of staff will contact you.

The school will also be supervising the remote learning of **critical worker children** across this period. Again, to keep the numbers in school at a safe level, we are offering this primarily to those families where all adults in the home are key workers who are at work during the school day and their children are in either Year 7 or Year 8. We will be speaking to parents to confirm their critical worker status for students in these two year groups. If you haven't already, or you haven't already been contacted, please email enquiries@tarletonacademy.org.

For children of critical worker parents in other year groups where you feel there may be a safeguarding concern if working at home unattended, please also email enquiries@tarletonacademy.org with details, include a contact number and a member of staff will contact you directly to discuss.

Lunch will be provided for those students in school and we will be clarifying numbers with Lancashire County Council so that where needed, dedicated transport to and from school is available.

The timings of the school day will remain unchanged with students expected at 8.45am in full school uniform, prepared for learning with the correct equipment and a fully charged Chromebook. The finish time will be 3.15pm

Remote Learning Support

The majority of students in Year 7 to Year 11 will be provided with home learning via ClassCharts in line with their usual timetable for Wednesday 6th January – Friday 8th January.

Staff will be setting work that best supports your child dependent on their year group and the time of the academic year. Whilst not an exhaustive list, this will include work to consolidate learning from the autumn term, learning in line with current schemes of work and where necessary remote learning support to prepare students for both practice and final examinations.

As you will know, staff will not be delivering live lessons for the reasons previously outlined across lockdown periods last year. To maintain our high quality remote learning provision, teachers will be sharing subject resources across the trust, and supplementing their own planning with highly regarded remote resources provided by both Oak National Academy and Greenshaw Learning, which include many instances of interactive teaching.

There are also additional subject reading and watching lists to extend student learning which can be found [HERE](#).

Year 7 Carousel Groups

As we spent the first term getting to know your child both academically and as a person and helping them adjust to high school in this far from normal year, we are now at a point where we have decided to make alterations to class groupings for the carousel subjects.

Our Teachers, House Progress Leaders and our pastoral staff have taken into account a number of factors when aligning the new groupings and have done so in the best interests of the students. These will come into effect immediately and your child will see some changes to classes when they log into ClassCharts.

Contact with students

During this period of remote learning, staff will be contacting students on a more regular basis to secure high ClassCharts engagement, motivate where necessary and check on wellbeing and welfare.

This will be a face-to-face online meeting by appointment via 'Google meet' and will be arranged by appointment, directly by staff with students. We will contact you should there be any ClassCharts engagement concerns and if needed, ask for your support in getting students back on track.

Free School Meals

For those families in receipt of free school meals, the school will be issuing Edenred Vouchers on a weekly basis that can be downloaded. If you do not receive an email from the school by **1pm on Friday 8th January**, please email enquiries@tarletnacademy.org with details and a member of staff will contact you directly.

School Calendar Events

Given the uncertainty surrounding tiered restrictions, national lockdown measures, mass testing and vaccination programmes, and the knock-on effect for schools, we are currently postponing all events on the school calendar for a very short period until further clarity can be provided. This may include both parents' and options evenings, although we are keen for these to happen as soon as possible through remote platforms. Please be rest assured that you will be notified in good time of either the dates and times of a re-arranged event or confirmation that an existing event will go ahead as planned.

Communication Matters

We work hard to provide excellent communication at Tarleton Academy and know from your feedback how you have valued receiving our regular parent updates. As we begin a new year, that commitment remains unchanged and as each new challenge unfolds we will be contacting you with the updates and information you require.

Our support teams are currently exploring the feasibility of the procedures and protocols to ensure that mass testing can take place safely and smoothly, once students start returning to school. We await further guidance as to where the capacity will come to support this, but we will ensure all other arrangements are in place as best we can in the interim.

There are certain to be more changes and developments over the coming days and we will send further updates as the week progresses in line with this.

Many thanks for your ongoing understanding and support.

Yours faithfully,

M Cunniffe

Head of School
Tarleton Academy