

6th November 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

### **Important update – lockdown information**

You will no doubt already be acutely aware of the country being placed into a new “lockdown” from Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020. And you will also no doubt be planning how you will readjust your lives to accommodate the tighter restrictions which have come into place as a result.

There have been some updates to the government guidance in terms of accessing education, and I wanted to share the key changes with you so everyone is aware of what is expected in school for the foreseeable future.

### **School openings**

Schools will remain open during the lockdown period, and attendance is expected as normal. This is to ensure education can continue as seamlessly as possible, and enable those preparing for their GCSE exams to do so uninterrupted. If we receive information about a positive case of COVID, we will take the steps prescribed in law to ensure students are kept safe by asking those affected to self-isolate.

### **Positive cases**

If you or your child encounters symptoms of COVID (temperature, loss of taste and/or smell, or a new, continuous cough), please do not send your child to school. Please isolate as per government guidelines, and contact school to let us know. Your child’s absence will be recorded as Covid-related, and will not affect attendance records. This is to protect other students and staff.

It is recommended that whoever has symptoms gets a test as soon as possible; if the test returns positive, please contact school as soon as possible, as it may be necessary for other students to isolate as a result.

### **Face coverings**

The government has changed its language regarding face coverings, and is now essentially saying that, unless there are clinical reasons which dictate otherwise in individual circumstances, all staff and students in secondary schools need to wear a face covering whilst not in the classroom, as a very minimum.

As an academy, we want as many people that can wear face coverings to do so, where they can do so safely, to protect everyone's health. If, however, your child is exempt from wearing a mask, there is no requirement for a letter to be provided by your GP or the hospital.

This all constitutes a change in approach, and as a school we have to and want to abide by the guidance issued by the government. It is there to protect everyone in the school environment, and will hopefully prevent the further spread of the virus, which we all know is increasing exponentially with every day that passes.

The government continues to affirm that it is safer for students to be in school than not in school, and therefore I want to reiterate that the wearing of face coverings in social and communal areas is VITAL. Many students and staff live with vulnerable people, and we need to work together to ensure we do not unnecessarily endanger anyone inside or outside school.

I would be extremely grateful if you could support us in ensuring your children wear face coverings whilst in the building. We will, of course, keep in touch with you in the usual way if there are any changes to guidance or other important information to share with you.

### **Visitors**

In order to minimise the risk of spread of the virus, we are doing everything we can to reduce the number of visits to the academy as possible. We would urge parents not to arrive in school without an appointment as much as possible during this period; of course there are occasions where it is necessary to be in school – if this is the case, please ensure you wear a face covering and maintain social distancing wherever possible.

I totally understand that this is an anxious time for everyone, but we are doing everything we can to keep people as safe as possible. I hope I can count on your continued support to discharge this responsibility effectively.

My very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Mitchell', written in a cursive style.

**Mr J Mitchell**  
**Principal**