



Westfield Arts College



05 January 2021

Dear Parent and Carers

Please read – important information about school return

The last few days have been particularly challenging for us in trying to prepare for the return of pupils. This was made even more challenging yesterday with the announcement of the new national lockdown from tomorrow. I had to ask you to keep your child at home today to give us time to plan and prepare and I am very grateful for your support.

Returning to school

All of our pupils have an EHCP and fall under the Government definition of vulnerable. We feel very strongly that the best place for them is in school and we have made plans for all pupils to return to school from tomorrow, Wednesday 6th January. We have made arrangements to use every available space in school and made amendments to the timetable to support social distancing and class bubbles and to keep everyone safe. The changes won't be easy for some of your children but they are necessary for us to be fully open. The alternative is that we return to the situation we had last March where a few pupils are in school but most are at home, and this is something we are working hard to avoid. I know that most of you will rather have your child in school.

COVID-19 testing of Secondary pupils

At the same time as making these changes we have been preparing for COVID-19 testing for Secondary aged pupils and for all staff. These tests will help us to identify any positive asymptomatic cases and make sure they isolate, which will reduce the risk of spreading the virus. We are hoping to have this testing available from tomorrow, however it is a huge task and we are reliant on the materials and information provided to us. Parent carers of Secondary aged pupils will need to return a consent form in order for your child to be tested. We would encourage you to give consent as this will support the tracking of asymptomatic cases, but it is optional.

Testing of Primary pupils

At present there has been no requirement for us to test Primary aged pupils, even though we are an all-age school. We believe that it will be best if we can test younger pupils as well and are seeking some advice on this. I will let you know once we hear something.

Factors that impact our provision for pupils

The national lockdown will have an impact on many of our staff who have children in schools. Our staff are considered 'critical workers' and their children should also be offered provision in their schools but we have no way of ensuring this. Some staff have conditions which make them vulnerable, and some live with in a household where a person is shielding. All of this means that we can't guarantee that all our staff will be available to work all the time. We ask for your understanding and support around this. It may be necessary to close some class groups at short notice if we do not have sufficient staff available.



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Home learning and remote education

As before we aim to provide activities for those pupils who work from home, although we know that this is a huge challenge for most of our pupils. As we remain fully open for pupils, the expectation is that most of them will be in school to learn and this is where the focus will be for our teachers and staff. We will not be able to provide specialist remote learning for those at home, although we will be working on a suitable offer over the coming days and weeks.

Transport

School transport are intending to operate as usual, however, they will also be affected by staff absence. It may not be possible for them to provide transport for your child.

Please let us know if you do not intend to send your child into school as this will help us with our planning and ensuring we have adequate staff.

Thank you again for your understanding and your support. We will stay in regular contact to inform you of any changes.

Yours sincerely

Seán Kretz
Head Teacher



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