

26th February 2021

Dear Families,

We are really looking forward to welcoming the majority of our children back from the 8<sup>th</sup> March. Lots of our learners have successfully been engaged in remote learning during these national restrictions and we are looking forward to seeing them return to school.

Back in July we shared with you a range of control measures (endorsed by *Public Health England*) that we had implemented to help minimise risks as much as possible. We have included them again in this letter to remind families what these measures are.

We are aware that there is a new variant of the virus, however, *Public Health England* have stated using the same control measures is the appropriate way to help control this variant.

We have reviewed our measures, as although the number of cases is reducing, the prevalence of the virus is still high in the community. Staff already wear a face covering when moving around the school. Staff will also wear face coverings if social distancing cannot be maintained, and where appropriate. Teachers will discuss this with you in their next weekly welfare calls.

In addition to this, the large majority of our staff are now being tested for COVID twice a week. This is really important as a third of positive cases are people with no symptoms, so this regular testing will help us to identify cases quickly and minimise risks further.

The Government have also announced that they would like students in secondary schools to engage in weekly testing at home. Home test kits can be sent home for students to carry out the test and upload the results to NHS Test and Trace and school (with the support of their parents/carers). We appreciate that not all of our students will be able to engage in this for various reasons and this isn't mandatory, however for those students that can carry out testing at home we would encourage this. Further information or any question you may have will be discussed with your child's teacher in their next weekly welfare call.

**Shielding advice for all adults and children has been extended to the 31<sup>st</sup> March and the advice is that if your child has received a shielding letter they should remain at home.**

Once again, can we thank all our families for their continued support especially over this last year. Hopefully we can now look forward to a brighter future and be back as a whole school community soon.

## Catcote Academy

### System of Control Measures

Protective measures will be put in place for staff and students **as far as possible** to ensure the risk of transmission is **reduced**. We know that transmission of the disease happens through direct (coughing, sneezing) and indirect (touching surfaces) transmission.

#### Minimise contact:

- Classes will operate in class bubbles in order to minimise the number of contacts.
- Where possible there will be several entrances and exits to reduce pinch points.
- Students will have access to larger outdoor spaces and their use will be staggered.
- Students will eat in their own class.
- Students will have access to their own resources. Any shared resources will be cleaned before someone else uses them.
- Where appropriate teachers will adapt their classroom to support distancing.
- No visitors including parents will be allowed into the building without prior approval from the Head Teacher/Senior Leadership Team.
- For some student's, risk assessments may mean that staff will need to wear protective clothing (this will be discussed with families).

#### Socially distancing:

- Where possible social distancing measures will be put in place and classrooms will be adjusted to enable this, however we know that for the vast majority of our students this will be very difficult. Where possible close face to face contact will be avoided and we will minimise the time spent within 1 metre of anyone where possible.

#### Cleaning:

- There will be increased cleaning including regular washing down of surfaces including tables, chairs, handles, light switches etc.

#### Hand and respiratory hygiene:

- All students will be asked to clean hands frequently throughout the day including entry to the school, before and after eating and before leaving the school.
- Students who find hand washing difficult will be engaged in activities that involve soapy water play.
- Students will be taught to use tissues when coughing and sneezing and to place these in a lidded bin.

#### Curriculum:

- The curriculum for students will remain broad and balanced and initially there will be a strong focus on rebuilding friendships and social engagement, emotional and physical well-being.
- Outdoor spaces will be used as much as possible.
- There will be no offsite visits however to support our 'Mile a Day' students may take part in walks in the local area.
- If there are students that need to remain at home following medical advice work will be sent home and absence will be authorised.

#### Transport:

- Government guidance recognises that some mixing in wider groups may need to take place, for example, when on transport. In order to reduce mixing as much as possible students will be transported into school/college within a zone which means that they will mix with students outside their class bubble.
- Students will be greeted by their staff on a morning and taken straight to their class via their allocated entrance.
- In accordance with advice from public health England the government are now recommending that from September children and young people over the age of 11 should wear a face covering on dedicated school transport. Students who would be exempt would include students who cannot put on, wear or remove the face covering due to physical or mental illness or impairment or disability or if the wearing of one would cause severe stress. If you feel your child or young person is able to wear one and understands how to handle their face covering properly this can be a reusable or single use face covering. If reusable face coverings are used students should bring in a plastic bag to keep their face covering in when in school/college. We have included a link on our website on how to wear a covering (COVID-Guidance).
- Any independent travellers that come into school on public transport need to continue to follow guidance e.g. wear face covering whilst on the bus.
- To support good respiratory hygiene students are encouraged to have tissues on them in case they are needed on transport.
- If you intend to transport your child in there will be drop off/visitor bays on the academy side immediately on the left as you enter the car park.
- If you have any further queries around transport, please contact them directly on 01429 284382.

#### Other important information:

- If your child or a member of your household, shows any symptoms they must not attend school or college and must isolate at home in line with Government guidelines (which can be found on our website). Please note that any child or young person who test positive must now stay off for 10 days and household members would quarantine for 10 days.
- It is important to engage with NHS test and Trace.
- Attendance of all students is expected except those who need to remain at home following professional advice. If your child is absent due to professional advice you will not be penalised.
- Testing is available for staff and students that show symptoms through a self-referral system and it is very important that you get your child tested promptly in the event your child shows symptoms.
- Students at home should be following socially distancing measures with their families and not engaging in wider social interactions in line with Phase 1 Government guidelines.
- It is very important that we have an up to date contact number and that you are contactable during the day.

Kindest Regards



Mrs L. Greig

(Interim CEO)