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|  |  |  | Music Stuff195 Fog LaneBurnageManchesterM20 6FJ07483 357 679 (M) |

3rd March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Following the Government’s announcement last week, I am very excited to be writing to you to inform you of the **re-opening of Manchester Secondary PRU to all of our pupils from 8th March 2021**. I know that for many of you at home this will have been a very difficult time trying to balance your own commitments with the need to support us to provide the best education we can for your child. I have been amazed at the resourcefulness and resilience you and your family have shown though this recent period of lockdown and wanted to thank you for your ongoing support.

Below is some extra information about the measures currently in place in school, and some changes which

will happen when all the pupils return. **Please take the time to read it carefully** and consider the ways in which you and your child can help to ensure the continuing safety of all pupils and adults in school.

**Attendance at School**

Once again, from the 8th March 2021 school attendance will become compulsory. Children must attend school every day and on time. Those families who have children with low attendance will be contacted during the first week to ensure the children are in school.

If your child is unable to attend for any reason, contact must be made with your child’s Learning Centre on the first day of absence via phone call.

**The Curriculum**

The staff have done an amazing job over the last 8 weeks of ensuring the curriculum in school is followed, so that whether pupils have been in school or joining in from home with live-streamed lessons, they have had every opportunity to keep up with their studies. I cannot thank parents and family members at home enough for all their hard work and dedication to the pupils over the last few week, I know for some it has been enjoyable and a great experience, and for others it has been a long hard slog! Our curriculum will not be narrowed once the children are back, and the children will continue to take part in all their lessons as they did in the first term.

Our focus in the final 3 weeks of this term will be to assess the pupils in all of their subjects and then begin the process of planning for term 3. Our aim is to provide a stimulating learning experience for all of our pupils and to support them to become fully re-engaged with learning.

Government guidance currently advises that educational visits are currently not permitted which is impacting on the off-site activities we would usually plan. We will continue to monitor this and get back to normal as soon as we possibly can.

**Shielding**

Pupils who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (those who have been sent a letter by their GP or NHS service) will continue to work at home.

**COVID PREVENTION AND PLANNING**

Whilst the Government science advisers are currently saying that it is the right time to open schools for all pupils, the concerns around the spread of COVID remain a serious matter. The new variants which originated in Kent and Brazil are believed to spread much more readily, and the transmission rates remain high. With this in mind, the Risk Assessments and Management Plan is being reviewed to ensure that any significant risks in relation to COVID-19 are considered and plans are put in place to manage those risks as best as possible.

Here are some of the plans that we have had in place for some time:

* Face masks will be worn in areas within your child’s Centres in places where social distancing cannot be maintained.
* Pupils and staff will continue to wash hands at regular intervals throughout the day.
* Pupils will be reminded of personal hygiene and social distancing on the first day back to school.
* We have instigated a higher frequency of cleaning throughout the school, specifically focusing of frequently touched surfaces.
* We have reduced the number of visitors to our Centres by restricting visits to only those which are deemed to be essential. We have moved many of our meetings to be online, therefore reducing the likelihood of cross-contamination from people outside of the Centre.
* Where possible doors and windows will be kept open to allow good ventilation.

Alongside these well-established measures we are also introducing:

**Lateral Flow Testing**

Lateral flow tests have been in place for members of staff in school for some time now. Tests are conducted every 3-5 days and the outcomes are reported to the government. This is one of the ways in which we hope to detect people who have the virus but are asymptomatic.

From Monday 8th March, the Government have asked that we undertake Lateral Flow Tests with our pupils. Over the coming week a member of staff from your child’s Learning Centre will talk to you to get your consent for the test. Staff will then arrange a time for your child to come into Centre and have their test. The test is extremely easy to take and the results are known within 30 minutes. We hope to have undertaken the first test with all pupils on or before 8th. This will be followed by two further tests in school then pupils will be provided with home test kits to test themselves, supervised by parents and carers, twice a week.

Testing for both staff and pupils will remain voluntary and only be undertaken where consent has been provided but is strongly encouraged.  Test results undertaken at home must be reported to the NHS Test and Trace as soon as the test is completed either online or by telephone as per the instructions in the home test kit.

Pupils not undergoing testing should continue to attend school as normal from Monday 8th March.

**Test and Trace**

Until further notice the reporting of positive cases remains the same, and the procedures in school will not

change. If a child or household member tests positive all the household must isolate for a period of 10 days

and school must be informed. If a child tests positive and the child has been in school over the previous 48

hours, we will undertake contact tracing to establish whether other members of the Learning Centre, staff or pupils, will be required to isolate. If this happens the pupils will be required to isolate for 10 days and our remote learning offer will begin. Remote learning will start from the day the pupils are asked to stay at home.

**Remember – if you, your children or any close contact has symptoms of coronavirus or has a positive**

**test, DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL**. If they have symptoms, get a test.

**Face Masks**

The DfE now recommend that face coverings should be worn in classrooms or during activities unless social distancing can be maintained. This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE sessions.

**In light of Govt advice around exemptions, and considering our pupils' complex social, emotional and mental health needs, it is understandable that many pupils may not be able to wear face masks some or all of the time. We will not insist on pupils wearing face coverings; but will recommend it.**

Pupils will be encouraged to wear masks and will be supported to do so, but we will continue to avoid any unnecessary escalation of distressed behaviour or provide a ready-made excuse for a pupil to be sent home. As per DfE advice, supplies of masks will be available for pupils in school.

We understand that there are some circumstances where people may not be able to wear face masks.  If this affects your child, please contact their centre manager. This is a really important step in working to stop the spread of the virus and trying to protect all pupils and staff from being infected. Please help us in communicating this message to your child.

Finally, I would once again like to thank you all. Over the past 6 months, by working together, we have managed to keep the school as safe as we possibly can for your child, all of the other pupils and all of our staff. We have managed to have very little disruption to classes in school, and very few positive cases of staff and pupils. This is down to everyone playing their part and following the rules. I cannot express how much more important this is now going to be.

Manchester continues to have infection rates well above the national average, which means the virus is still very much around us – so we must all do our best and play our part.

Thank you again for your ongoing support, and we really look forward to seeing your child on 8th.

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| Matthew McCannHeadteacher (Music Stuff) |