

Dear parents and carers,

We are writing to you to confirm arrangements for your child's return to school following the various announcements from the Department for Education over the last couple of weeks.

With Essex currently experiencing considerably high growth in the rate of Covid-19 and being subject to the highest level of local restrictions – Tier 4 – it is clear that we need to act with care.

Although the Department for Education has directed a delay to schools re-opening, please note that Early Years settings and Special Schools **(including Pupil Referral Units) are not affected and can open as normal, with some flexibility, in the first week.** Read the full [DfE guidance for parents on GOV.UK](#)

For now, we intend to follow our original plan, shared with you all at the end of last term:

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> Jan** - INSET (no pupils)

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> Jan** – Pupil Review Meetings (remotely by telephone, or TEAMS)

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> Jan** – COVID Planning day (no pupils). Some review meetings may also be taking place on this day.

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> and Friday 8<sup>th</sup> Jan** – Remote learning timetable. *However, if we feel that our arrangements are such that we can safely have children on site, we will change to 'on site' learning.*

**For secondary school-age children**, we are advising that all those parents and carers [book an online PCR test](#) before the start of term via the Government website. Please select the option that you have been asked to get a test by a local council (unless your child is showing symptoms of Covid-19).

In addition to the above, we must also ask that you and your family continue to follow all current Government Covid guidance:

### **Social Distancing**

For any preventative measures and current guidance to be as effective as it can be, it is imperative that young people practice social distancing at all times while outside of their education setting.

## Face coverings

We strongly encourage you and your child/children to wear face coverings at appropriate times. For secondary aged students, it remains compulsory to wear a face covering on transport.

Although our numbers on site enable us to maintain social distancing, your child may choose to wear a face covering whilst moving around the building.

## Testing

We are sure that many of you will have questions around the publicised testing of pupils on site. We await further guidance from Essex (due on Monday), on appropriately mobilising the testing programme. This is one reason we wish to maintain some flexibility in the first week – to ensure we have considered all the relevant guidance and safety advice. Further information and guidance will be issued as soon as possible.

We know the start of the 2020/21 school year has been difficult for many, and many of our children will have been looking forward to returning to school after the Christmas break. They may, like you, feel anxious or frustrated by the present situation. Please be assured that we are here to offer support where we can and will do everything we can to make the return to school a safe and positive experience.

Thank you for your continued support.



Jo Barak

Head of Service

## Children's Support Service

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