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March 1st 2021

Wider Opening of Schools March 8th 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to let you know that we are preparing to accept all pupils back on site from Monday March 8th 2021.

To date, we have had a high percentage of pupils at school during this period of partial opening and therefore we are confident about our procedures and safety. It is also good to be able to report that there have been no full bubble closures during this period of opening from January 2021, or any cases of pupils who have tested positive that have led to an outbreak at school.

Staff testing is in place twice a week and approximately 95 % of staff have now had their first vaccination.

How we will organise the school day and class bubbles:

As you will know from my last letter we have moved to class sized bubbles and in reviewing the NYCC risk assessment guidance, and the Additional Operational Guidance for Special Schools provided by the Government, this is the recommended way of continuing as far as we are able. The exact intention is to "try to implement 'bubbles' of an appropriate size to achieve the greatest reduction in contact and mixing.....Whatever the size of the group they should be kept apart from other groups where possible".

For this reason, we ask for your support as we will continue to close at 12.30 on a Friday afternoon, certainly until Easter. We do this in order to minimise staff movement between class bubbles. By closing on a Friday afternoon staff can have their Planning Preparation and Assessment time without introducing a 'cover' member of staff to the bubble. It also means that these staff who might move between up to five groups a week feel safe and well supported. We will review this, but feel that at this time this arrangement should continue as a safe and supportive measure to both staff and pupils.



How we will introduce pupil testing for Secondary and Sixth Form:

During the next few days we will call families, if your child is NOT YET attending school and in this age group. We will discuss whether you would like your son or daughter to have a lateral flow test as they return. We will talk to you about how this is done and when. We know this will not be something everyone wants for their child and there is no obligation for pupils to be tested in order to return. After this and once we have opened fully, we believe there is an option that this age range of pupils could have home testing kits and we will let you know about this once we have some more information. Again, there is no obligation for this to happen, it is consent based.

Risk Assessment:

Our risk assessment is based on the one provided by North Yorkshire County Council. We ask that you follow social distancing procedures if you are dropping off or collecting your child. There are marked out spots to help you with distancing. Please continue to wear a face covering. Pupils who can wear a face covering – secondary age and above – should do so on transport and will be encouraged to wear them in class or in communal areas. At this time educational visits are not allowed. We are reviewing how to provide some off-site experiences in the locality – such as the park, nature areas, the train station and further afield – by walking – where pupils are able to safely do so.

Remote Learning:

As all staff will be on site working with pupils, we are preparing remote learning plans for the period up until Easter now so that they can be available on the website, should a pupil need to access them – for example if they need to self-isolate. Please ask for support if you need it, we are always happy to help with resources or advice if that is required. In the case of bubble closures and if appropriate to a pupils' specific needs, we aim to provide live learning and enhance teacher/staff contact with you. Live remote lessons will cease from March 8th, as it is expected that pupils will return to school. We will intend continuing with our Friday afternoon live remote assemblies until Easter.

I would like to thank our families once again for their support and patience as we respond to all these changes during the pandemic. It will be particularly lovely to welcome back all the pupils who have been working at home since we broke up in December 2020.

Best wishes,

Sarah Edwards

Headteacher

