

9 November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I wanted to write to you after receiving the updated guidance for schools. I know this is a very worrying time and appreciate that you among many others feel very anxious at this time and sometimes it can be confusing and worrying about making the right decision.

The guidance remains the same for schools and that all schools will remain open to all students. New guidance today said that there are mandatory changes around face coverings in school. I can confirm that as a special school, this does not apply to us and our young people are exempt from this in school. For some students, it may be appropriate to wear a face covering and this is your choice as a parent or carer. I hope to reassure you that drivers and Passenger Assistants on transport have been asked to wear a face covering and this could be a visor or mask.

Staff in school are wearing a visor or mask whenever they work outside of their direct bubble and on transport. As I said in my previous letter, we have reduced movement further and restricted visitors in to school to an absolute minimum and wherever possible any urgent visitors are taking place after students have left the school wherever possible.

The latest guidance talks a lot about those people who are classed as Clinically Vulnerable or Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and the advice during this lockdown is for anyone who receives a letter, text or email advising them to shield should do this. Please could we ask you to send us a copy of this communication to register on our attendance records. We are working with Health professionals to identify any students who fall into this category and will work with you and health to identify the best course of action during this period of lockdown.

We also may have some staff who need to shield throughout this period, this may leave us with reduced staffing in some areas of the school and this may result in changes to the curriculum. We will try very hard not to close areas of the school and if we have to do this will do so with the full advice and guidance from both the Local Authority and Public Health England. The only reason we would close down part of the school is due to safety and safeguarding, this could be related to a positive COVID case or because we have significant shortage of staff. We will of course inform you at the earliest opportunity, but this may result in very short notice due to the nature of the pandemic we are all facing.

We are also preparing home learning packs, we will ensure that these are sent out to you should your child need to self-isolate or shield during this period. We will ensure that we continue to share links to learning and fun activities through both the school website and through the social media platforms for the school.

Please could I ask you again to ensure we have your up to date contact details including mobile phone, emergency contact and email to enable us to communicate with you quickly and effectively.

We will keep you informed of any further changes or updates to the guidance or practice in school and to reassure you that we are doing everything we can to ensure we keep our school community as safe as possible.

Please do contact us if you have any questions or require any further information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H. Farnell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'H'.

Helen Farnell  
Executive Head Teacher