



10 September 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

I am writing to you at the end of what has been a very positive first week of the new academic year. It has been fantastic to meet students and talk about the amazing school we aim to become. I have been hugely impressed by the positive and welcoming response I have received.

As I wrote in my earlier letters to parents, we know that students are returning to school in unprecedented and uncertain times.

The safety of our pupils and staff remains our main priority. To support us in this effort, please ensure that your child does not attend school if s/he has any COVID-19 symptoms.

If a pupil has COVID-19 symptoms then they must:

- Self-isolate at home (and not come to school)
- Get tested immediately.

The rest of the family (including any siblings) must also stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days. If a pupil lives with a household member who has symptoms, then they must not come to school – they should self-isolate for 14 days with the rest of the household.

If your child does become unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), you must arrange for them to have a test to see if they have COVID-19. You can book a test at a local site or order a home test kit on the [NHS website](#) or contact NHS 119 via telephone if you do not have internet access. If anyone else in your household develops any of these symptoms then they must also have a test. Please inform the school of any positive results.

As I have expressed to students, we are all in a new normal and need to take extra precautions to keep each other safe. The information on our website highlights the detailed planning and safety measures we have put in place to protect each other whilst maintaining a strong focus on learning.

We have had our first case of COVID-19 in the school and, thanks to the comprehensive measures we have put in place to minimise the risk of the virus spreading, we were quickly able to identify a small number of pupils who had been in close contact with the pupil who has tested positive. In line with advice from Public Health England, these pupils and the pupil who has tested positive are now self-isolating for two weeks at home, where they will continue their studies. Because we had planned pupil groups carefully, we were able to work out quickly who may have been exposed to the virus. The school remains safe and open to all other pupils.

Whilst I have the opportunity to write to you again, I would like to highlight a few further areas.

We have welcomed some outstanding new teachers to the school this year. I am looking forward to seeing the work (and homework) that students will be producing over the next few weeks and months.

Buildings

I would like to draw parents' attention to the amazing new facilities the Academy has opened this week. The year 7 and 8 student zones have seen some fantastic learning to match the new surroundings.

Much work has occurred to make these changes during the summer break. The work indicates a huge investment in our student's future from Star Academies. This work will continue in a staged manner over the next few years as we look to continually update the Academy buildings. The current works will be completed during the October half-term break.

Uniform

Whilst we know that COVID-19 has caused some supply issues for our school in relation to uniform, the students have been very smart on return. I am sorry for the inconvenience and concern the delays with uniform may have caused you. I strongly believe that uniform is very important in developing a real sense of personal pride. In the coming weeks, we will be ensuring that we reinforce the high standards we have spoken to students about and, once all pupils have received their new uniform, that the school uniform policy is upheld to the highest standard.

Home learning

I am a firm believer that purposeful home learning is essential. As many students have missed a big proportion of learning over the past few months, from next week we will be rolling out our new home learning policy. This will consist of a new approach that will see all students have a core expectation to complete work from their new knowledge organisers, online learning in English and Maths or reading a book. I will send a detailed letter next week with the timetable for each year group.

Communication

In the first few weeks my general communication has been via letters. I am aware that this is not always the best method. I will be running some online open forums for parents in different year groups over the next few weeks to at least try and meet you and share my plans for the Academy. I will also be putting a weekly 'Heads Up' on our website to try and condense all of the key information for parents into a regular update. In the interim, please feel free to contact the Academy with any questions you may have.

I look forward to hopefully meeting you in more certain times.

Yours sincerely,



Mr A. O'Brien

Executive Principal